

ABSTRACT

Project Title: *Oklahoma's Future Begins with Children*

Applicant: *The Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness Foundation, Inc.*

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Oklahoma's vision is to create the country's most effective early childhood mixed delivery system by building seamless connections between existing resources, informed through a deeper understanding of gaps and inefficiencies to ensure low-income and disadvantaged children have equitable access to early learning opportunities. As the lead entity and serving as the State Advisory Council, the Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness (OPSR) will lead the "Oklahoma's Future Begins with Children" (OKFutures) initiative funded under the Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five by building upon existing partnerships and early childhood systems planning efforts, as well as by engaging early childhood experts from state and tribal organizations and associations, the provider community, parents, philanthropic and business leaders and concerned citizens to work together collectively to fill systems level gaps and reach the most vulnerable and underserved children.

To begin, OPSR will coordinate participating organizations and the resources provided by this funding opportunity to support a comprehensive needs assessment and segmentation analysis, which will inform a strategic plan aimed at reducing mixed delivery system fragmentation and inefficiencies and at building the capacity in the workforce and in communities throughout the system. A segmentation analysis of needs data will be used to identify supports for and engage the most vulnerable and underserved children and places in Oklahoma. In addition, "Oklahoma's Future" will develop capacity for family leadership through resident-led community groups to support parent choice in the education of their children. The strategic plan itself will be informed and guided by family voice, which will, in turn, inform create of an effective public awareness and engagement campaign for reaching families most in need of early childhood supports. Specifically, Oklahoma will focus on building stronger systems of supports for infants and toddlers, building capacity to support inclusion of vulnerable children in early care and education programs, and expanding partnerships to build capacity and communications, and community engagement strategies will be developed to support parents in the development of their children and support their transitions between programs and into public school. A multi-tiered professional development plan to share best practices and improve program quality will build upon the success of Oklahoma's existing but limited exemplary high-quality programs to create equitable access across the state. Long-term goals are to increase participation, expand quality, strengthen community partnerships, expand options for parents and create accountability. Finally, an evaluation team will work with a project evaluator implementing development evaluation to monitor progress toward grant goals and objectives and to plan broader system evaluation for future quality improvement efforts.

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SECTION I. APPROACH

The State of Oklahoma is pleased to present this application for the Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five (PDG B-5) CFDA Number 93.434. Until very recently, Oklahoma has been an example for other state on how to set quality standards and create universal access to PreK, but a recent lack of federal and state funding for infrastructure support has stalled efforts to improve the effectiveness of our mixed delivery system. We are resolved to recapture and maintain our reputation as an early childhood field leader by creating the country's most effective early childhood mixed delivery system. To that end, we propose to use this funding opportunity to meet two overarching goals: 1) identify, refine, and implement long-overdue improvements to the state's entire early childhood mixed delivery system, and 2) target special strategies and resources on closing disparities in services and outcomes for Oklahoma's most vulnerable and underserved children and families.

The Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness (OPSR) has been designated by Governor Mary Fallin (Appendix 1) to lead this effort. OPSR is a quasi-governmental organization created under the enabling legislation of the Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness Act of 2003 Title 10 O.S.§ 640 to promote school readiness. The Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness Board (OPSR Board) serves as the State Early Childhood Advisory Council and is responsible for accomplishing both state and federal legislative duties and responsibilities. With an established reputation for providing non-partisan support for best practices in policy, programs and services to improve early childhood outcomes, the OPSR has the expertise, capacity and experience to lead Oklahoma's coordination of the OKFutures initiative. The OPSR regularly convenes diverse partners in the performance of its legislative duties and has already brought together philanthropic partners such as the George Kaiser Family Foundation, Inasmuch and the Potts

Family Foundation and business partners representing Express Personnel and Chesapeake Energy, to develop a comprehensive systems-focused plan to improve the quality, accessibility and responsiveness of Oklahoma's mixed delivery service system overall, and to develop specific strategies for improving outcomes for the most vulnerable and underserved places and children, families, and places in the state.

Previous needs assessments of the Oklahoma's ECE system and early consultation with partners confirm that Oklahoma continues to have rich infrastructure of ECE programs and services in place, but that the state needs a strong collaborative governance structure and resources such as those provided under this funding opportunity to refine and meet refine strategic objectives under both our goal areas. For our first goal — strengthening the entire mixed delivery system — our approach to the five activities areas will help to shape and implement objectives like: greater alignment across various provider types and funding streams, cross-sector quality standards, streamlined monitoring, integrated data systems, continuous quality improvement initiatives, coordinated workforce supports for preparation and professional development. For our second goal — reaching the most vulnerable and underserved children and families — service fragmentation at the systems level has made it particularly hard for marginalized families and children to access the services they need; thus, this opportunity will identify and support achieving strategic objectives focused on plugging the systems gaps that they most typically fall through, as well as reaching out to particular sub-populations in the ways and places they prefer and through which they will be most comfortable receiving support for the needs of their small children.

ACTIVITY ONE: NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Goal: To provide a clear understanding of where the Oklahoma early childhood system most needs to improve to provide the most effective mixed delivery system possible, and to provide a clear understanding of how and where to reach the families most in need of the supports the mixed delivery system can offer per their particular circumstances and preferences.

Criteria 1. *Clear description of how the state will address the required activity. 0-2 points.*

OPSR and its partners will conduct a needs assessment on the availability, quality, and alignment of existing health, early care and education, and family education and support programs in the mixed delivery system, and on the number and type of families who participate in this system.

This data will be integrated with existing needs assessment reports to prepare the required PDG B-5 Needs Assessment for approval by the Administration for Children and Families. The data collected for the needs assessment will be used to plan and implement effective strategies to increase participation in a high-quality mixed delivery system, give voice to Oklahoma families into the design and delivery of the system and give local organizations and providers an understanding of the needs of families to aid in the design of supports that lead to better outcomes. The segmentation analysis of needs data will be used to identify and develop specific strategies and metrics for reaching Oklahoma's most vulnerable and underserved children, families, and places (aka the target population).

Criteria 2. *Fully describe the process, defining the scope of the needs assessment. (0-2 points)*

OPSR, Participating State Agencies¹, and consultants will convene and collaborate to oversee and inform the needs assessment scope of work. The plan to complete the needs assessment and segmentation analysis will include procurement, data collection and analysis. New and existing

¹ Oklahoma State Department of Education, Oklahoma State Department of Health, Oklahoma Department of Human Services, Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, Oklahoma Department of Commerce and Oklahoma Commission on Children and Youth

needs assessment data and analysis will be integrated to create an updated report of an overall system analysis on how current policy, practice, alignment, and funding contributes to or restricts a cohesiveness system, and an analysis of program utilization, availability, costs and quality. A segmentation analysis will be conducted to discern which types of children, families, and places experience the most significant challenges and barriers to receiving support for their child development, learning, and family functioning needs. A linked analysis of policies, practices, and funding that impede equitable access and participation in programs and other supports will also be conducted, and both the overall needs assessment and segmentation analysis will be augmented by the gathering of family perspectives on their experience with accessing, affording, and choosing early care and education programs. Refer to Work Plan for goals, objectives, activities and milestones; Organizational Capacity and Management for procurement and administration procedures; Budget Narrative for detail of expenditures

Total Budgeted Amount: \$1,358,351

Outline of data to be included in needs assessment:

1. Availability of types of programs, quality level when applicable, participation rates, unduplicated count of children in Oklahoma's Mixed Delivery System, number of children on waiting lists, parent employment status and estimation of need. Tribal early childhood program participation from the 39 recognized Indian tribes in Oklahoma.
2. Cost analysis of high-quality infant, toddler and preschool programs; early childhood financing trends over the past ten years; state legislation, policies and procedures for enacting policies that impact program eligibility and participation; copay or costs to families; Oklahoma's tax and tax credit policies.

3. Data elements necessary to create an unduplicated count of children receiving services across health, human services and education agencies and to establish a set of core outcomes to be measured in early childhood program evaluations.

4. Workforce support, gaps in skills, use of evidence based practice, assessment and curriculum, recruitment and retention.

5. Gap analysis on transition services on strengths and gaps in transition practices.

The segmentation analysis will focus on identifying the target population of the most vulnerable and underserved families in tandem with analysis of:

1. Program data on their current level of participation in the mixed delivery system, including access to infant toddler, mental health, health, family support services broken down by geographic location and source of funding (state administered/tribal), and,

2. Qualitative data collected via surveys, interviews and stories with infant, toddler and preschool program staff and parents who participate and those who do not participate in early childhood programs, including tribal operated programs and tribal members to identify gaps and barriers.

Criteria 3. *Identify how other federal and State needs assessments will be leveraged and how the assessment plan aligns with the logic model and vision statement. (0-2 points)*

Leveraging Existing Needs Assessments

Upon award, OPSR partners and consultants will leverage existing needs assessments relevant to the completion of the PDG B-5 Needs Assessment to ensure each public sector supporting young children is considered to develop a comprehensive strategic plan. Needs assessments and data in Oklahoma exist in the following agencies/program areas:

Department of Human Services: Child Care and Development Block Grant; Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program; Social Services Block Grant; Temporary Assistance to Needy Families program (TANF)

Department of Education: Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA); Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Part B and C, Section 619; Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Program

Department of Health: Maternal and Infant early care home visit (MIECHV), Maternal and Child Health Block Grant, Women, Infant and Children, (WIC)

Health Care Authority: SoonerCare (Medicaid)

Head Start – Local Grantees, delegates, and State Collaboration Office

Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness: Data Systems; Program Standards Crosswalk; Professional Preparation and Training Programs

Previous assessments have highlighted needs of Oklahoma families and children, gaps in services and recommendations to address these concerns. This information will be considered in the development of the updated assessment to understand trends and persistent barriers.

Oklahoma's vision is to create the country's most effective early childhood mixed delivery system by building seamless connections between existing resources. This vision will be informed by a deeper understanding of gaps and inefficiencies to ensure low-income and disadvantaged children have equitable access to early learning opportunities. The robust synthesis of existing needs assessments and the incorporation of new data will lead to the development of a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of Oklahoma's early childhood care and education system, allowing the state to have a clearer understanding of gaps and opportunities. The collection of administrative, qualitative, and tribal program data, with a strong emphasis on parent voice, cultural sensitivity, and equity, will provide Oklahoma with the

opportunity to design a mixed delivery system responsive to the needs of all children and families in the state.

Criteria 4. *Provide a clear description of the populations of children who are vulnerable or underserved, as defined by the State, and children in rural areas. (0-2 points)*

Target Population: Throughout this application, a focus on children who are low-income, disadvantaged and underserved is referenced. For the purposes of this application, low-income will be defined as children in poverty and in low-income working families (defined as a family income less than 200% of the federal poverty level (FPL)). Oklahoma has an estimated 320,424 children birth through age five, 159,114 infants and toddlers and 161,310 preschool children. An estimated 23% of these young children live at 100% of the (FPL). In Oklahoma, 31% of young children live in low-income working families, one of the highest rates in the nation.²

Disadvantaged children are those who lack access to affordable early learning opportunities, resulting in poor health, developmental and academic outcomes. These children tend to be children of color, involved in the child welfare system, homeless, living in extreme poverty in rural and urban areas, immigrants, English language learners, have developmental delays, exposed to trauma, and have incarcerated parents and/or parents with mental illness and/or substance abuse disorders. Numerous studies have identified Oklahoma as being one of the highest states for children exposed to adverse childhood experiences. Rural areas are defined as those outside of the two metro areas and their contiguous counties. Due to the lack of resources available outside of Oklahoma City and Tulsa, underserved populations will be defined and determined through the needs assessment process, upon analysis of access, availability and family need.

² <https://datacenter.kidscount.org/data#OK/2/0/char/0>

efforts.

Criteria 5: *Thorough plan for the analysis of the quality and availability of programming and supports serving children B-5, and the unduplicated number of children being served and awaiting service in existing programs. (0-2 points)*

Bonus points: *Plan for Unduplicated Count of Children Being Served. (5 points)*

The analysis of the quality and availability of programming and supports serving children birth to five will be conducted by the Administrative Data Analysis, as described above, and will contribute to the understanding of an unduplicated count. Ongoing efforts in Oklahoma to create an Early Childhood Integrated Data System (ECIDS) occur under the coordination of OPSR. The highest priority of this system is to capture an unduplicated count of children served in Oklahoma's mixed delivery system. At the direction of the Governor and under the leadership of the Health and Human Services Cabinet, nine state agencies³ have signed a data sharing agreement. This agreement allows the option of each of the parties to share data in its database(s) for agency projects to regulate and improve the administration of programs. Through this collaboration, the Master Person Index (MPI) was selected to create a unique identifier. There are currently 65 million records and 16.6 million unique identifiers in the MPI. This year, records were successfully matched between Part C and MIECHV programs, the first use of the MPI to link data. In Oct. 2018, a legislative interim study was conducted to inform legislation in 2019 to ensure sustainability. During the needs assessment phase, a business analyst will create a data integration plan, identify data elements for outcome reporting and create a governance framework for data use. To obtain an unduplicated count of children enrolled in classrooms

³ Oklahoma Departments of Human Services, Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, Corrections, Rehabilitation Services; Office of Juvenile Affairs, Oklahoma Health Care Authority, Oklahoma Commission on Children and Youth, Oklahoma State Department of Health, Oklahoma State Department of Education

funded by both Head Start and pre-k, a contract with the state technology agency (OMES) will build a component in the student information system to identify dual enrollment in Head Start.

ACTIVITY TWO: STRATEGIC PLAN

Goal: Oklahoma's strategic plan creates an equitable and sustainable system for improving developmental and academic outcomes for all children, especially those who are most vulnerable and underserved.

Criteria 1. *Clear description of how the state will address the required activity. 0-2 points.*

OPSR and Participating State Agencies will provide leadership for the creation of a strategic plan that reflects the values of Oklahoma's families and accomplishes the following:

1. Improves the coordination and collaboration of programs and services by identifying opportunities to create efficiencies and reduce fragmentation, while influencing policies to improve health, developmental and academic outcomes for young children.
2. Develops recommendations to strengthen partnerships among Head Start providers, local educational agencies, state and local governments, Indian tribes and organizations, and private entities, including faith and community-based entities like health systems and libraries.
3. Develops strategies for overall system improvements to create alignment across program standards, clarify eligibility guidelines, create opportunities for collaboration and develop data systems to create an unduplicated count of children being served to inform investments for sustainable funding.
4. Gives program/provider recommendations for collaboration to increase provider competencies; development of standards for screening, assessment, curriculum and transitions; and the creation of coaching, mentoring and consultation supports that improve instruction and inclusion of vulnerable children in early care and education programs. Recommendations to

increase participation of low-income and underserved children based on data and family feedback collected in the needs assessment. This will create a system of support for parents in the development and transition of their children between early childhood programs into elementary school with a focus on meeting the needs of our target population (defined on page eight), per the findings of the segmentation analysis.

The OPSR Board (State Advisory Council) will serve as the state level coordinating body to approve the needs assessment and strategic plan at their regular quarterly meeting in June 2019.

The strategic plan will build upon the Oklahoma School Readiness Pathway (Pathway), the OPSR Board's existing strategic framework. The Pathway is focused on child and family outcomes and identifies key indicators that contribute to children being healthy, on track developmentally and prepared for school entry. The OPSR Board monitors trends, identifies actions and makes recommendations to improve overall early childhood outcomes. This indicator data will be useful to monitor participation and child and family outcomes in this project.

Criteria 2. *Fully describe the process, to update a strategic plan, build on previous planning efforts to improve coordination and collaboration and increase overall participation. (0-2 points)*

Beginning with the end in mind, OPSR and Participating State Agencies will draft components desired in the strategic plan upon award to guide the collection of the needs assessment data.

Facilitators will lead strategic planning sessions to engage stakeholders in at least eight geographically diverse communities in Oklahoma. A combination of urban, suburban, midsize cities and rural areas, ensuring tribal representation, will be selected. This process will create Oklahoma's first five-year comprehensive strategic plan, significantly informed and designed by parent voice, and focused on meaningful collaboration with tribal early childhood programs

(Head Start, child care and home visiting). Tribal consultants will ensure strategies align with the cultural needs of tribal members. Refer to Work Plan for goals, objectives, activities and milestones; Organizational Capacity and Management for procurement and administration procedures; Budget Narrative for detail of expenditures

Total Budgeted Amount: \$456,416

The strategic plan will build on the School Readiness Pathway by creating strategies to achieve desired outcomes and indicators. The plan will be designed to align with and support the purpose of the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Act of 2014.

The OKFutures strategic plan will align with and support goals of state plans in Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), Child Abuse Prevention, Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health, and Head Start Collaboration. The OKFutures project provides an opportunity to carefully plan and fund activities that support transitions, while improving quality and program alignment through collaboration and sharing best practices. It is expected that these activities will create a more cohesive system, which ultimately will lead to higher participation of children from our target population and measurements of such will be included in the plan. The plan will include specific strategies to provide curriculum and classroom instructional supports for infant-toddler care; training, coaching, mentoring and consultation to support inclusion of vulnerable children; and strategies to embed transition practices into community-based settings. Engaging parents in their communities through trusted messengers will equip them with knowledge and skills to navigate services. Creating a system that is affordable, accessible, high-quality and matches parents' cultural and linguistic values and norms will ensure their participation. OPSR has a track record of building collaboration between programs to increase coordination. Research presented at a the 2017 Early Childhood Research Symposium highlighted a

disconnect between children in foster care with those in early care and education services. As a result, new partnerships were formed, increasing the number of children in foster care enrolled in the Tulsa Educare program from 29 to 69.

Criteria 3. *Identify partnership opportunities to leverage resources to improve collaboration, coordination, policy alignment, program quality and service delivery, including activities to improve children's transition. (0-2 points)*

Current and new partnership opportunities will be leveraged to utilize existing resources to inform improved collaboration, coordination, policy alignment, program quality, service delivery and data collections. At the national level, guidance and consultation to implement ESSA, infant-toddler best practices, CCDBG requirements and overall early childhood systems will be leveraged through national networks. Organizations such as the Alliance for Early Success, Zero to Three, the BUILD Initiative, CEELO and the Council of Chief State School Officers' (CCSSO) High-Quality Pre-K Consortium currently support Oklahoma and will be utilized to guide and inform this project. Both the CCSSO and the Head Start Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center websites offer valuable activities on transition into Kindergarten. A transition specialist, employed by the Department of Education, will provide leadership to strategic planning for building and sustaining transition supports.

Partnerships will also be expanded at the community level to engage and support parents through schools, health and faith-based organizations, libraries, community centers, grocery stores and other places families go for support and information that are outside of traditional early care and education services.

Criteria 4. *How the strategic plan process will engage a full range of stakeholders.(0-2 points)*

Existing and new partnerships will be leveraged to engage a full range of stakeholders to plan and implement the OKFutures. OPSR will invite representatives of the mixed delivery system to the eight regional strategic planning meetings conducted in diverse communities across Oklahoma. Community stakeholders representing childhood care, pre-k, tribes, Head Start, Early Head Start/Child Care Partnerships, Educare, Oklahoma Early Childhood Program, parents, grandparents raising grandchildren, foster parents, nonprofits, United Way, Institute for Child Advocacy, Oklahoma Policy Institute (Kids Count grantee), philanthropic organizations, businesses and the private sector will be included in the assessment, planning and implementation processes of this project. OPSR and the Family and Community Engagement Team (page 14) will identify early learning coalitions, or other existing community coalitions with whom to engage to gather parent input. Informed by stories of families with lived experiences, the strategic plan will identify strategies that will meaningfully impact children and families in existing programs. Recommendations will be developed to advance quality, build capacity to support families as their child's first teacher and increase overall participation of children in early learning opportunities to facilitate a smooth transition into Kindergarten.

ACTIVITY THREE: MAXIMIZE PARENTAL CHOICE:

Goal: Increase parental knowledge of early childhood resources within Oklahoma's mixed delivery system.

Criteria 1. *Clear description of how the state will address the required activity. (0-3 points)*

Increasing parents' knowledge and choice of available opportunities to support their child's development, and successfully supporting their children through transitions between programs will be accomplished by increasing awareness for all parents of Oklahoma's mixed delivery system and building capacity in communities to share information with the target population.

Quality will be defined in a manner that is understandable to help families navigate family support, early care and learning options. Messages on the benefits of positive early experiences to support optimal brain development during the early years will be created. Information to support early learning both in their home and when in the care of others will be available. The public awareness campaign will be crafted, informed by the needs assessment and strategic plan, to guide messages and strategies to maximize parental choice and increase knowledge.

Oklahoma will build upon an existing collaboration, *Ready to Learn*, between the Oklahoma Department of Libraries and public television, Oklahoma Educational Television Authority (OETA) to build capacity in rural communities and in areas serving the target population. *Ready to Learn* currently provides resources to parents and schools to support early learning beginning at three. Public awareness message will be embedded into *Ready to Learn*. In addition, a model from *Talking is Teaching* will be integrated into the *Ready to Learn* initiative to support parents of infants and toddlers. *Talking is Teaching* is a current initiative through Tulsa Educare.

Oklahoma will also develop a model for deeper family engagement strategies to increase capacity and leadership within existing community-led groups through technical expertise from Vital Village, an organization that created a network of residents and organizations committed to maximizing child, family, and community well-being. Finally, a Community Transition ToolKit will be developed and distributed to support parents in the transition of their children between programs and into elementary school. Each of these activities will be guided and informed by The Family and Community Engagement Leadership Team, who will work to better understand family decision-making processes, preferences and priorities for quality care. The team will explore logistical, cultural and economic constraints that impact how families navigate, and ultimately, make early care and education decisions for their children. OPSR will be responsible

for executing and monitoring contracts. This activity will begin upon award and continue through the 12-month project period.

Criteria 2. *Clearly articulated a plan to ensure accurate information in a culturally and linguistically sensitive manner about the State's mixed delivery system (0-2 points)*

The Family and Community Engagement Leadership Team (page 36) will develop and oversee a plan to maximize parental choice to ensure that parents and families are provided timely, accurate information in a culturally and linguistically sensitive manner in order to promote and increase involvement in the development and education of their children. The first strategy will be to secure a contract with a communication firm with expertise in early childhood messaging to create a marketing campaign with a clear, cohesive messages designed to reach all parents and to tailor messages designed to meet diverse cultural and linguistic needs of Oklahoma's families. Once the messages are created, a media campaign will be developed to distribute messages to a broad audience of parents and their identified community support systems such as family, friends, employers, the medical community, faith-based organizations, libraries and schools. To meet federal requirements of consumer education, websites across agencies will be cross referenced for message coherence and enhancements will be made. Messages will be translated in at least three prominent languages in Oklahoma. The Participating State Agencies will contribute staff time to ensure messages are accurate and framed appropriately and assist with cross-referencing of website and communications.

A second strategy to maximize parental choice will build community capacity to engage and inform parents and family members by expanding existing parent education resources and developing models for effective community engagement, focused on creating supports for families of the target population. The *Ready to Learn* initiative will be expanded to include *Read,*

Sing, Play activities by engaging OETA and Department of Libraries and Tulsa Educare to develop an infant toddler component to *Ready to Learn*. Materials will be printed and grants will be offered to up to 100 libraries to implement the infant toddler component of *Ready to Learn*. A third strategy will create a module to inform future family engagement strategies by building community-led networks of opportunity. Technical assistance from the Vital Village Network will be leveraged through Project HOPE (Harnessing Opportunity for Positive Equitable Early Childhood Development), a grant awarded to OPSR by Nemours Children's Health System and funded by Robert Wood Johnson.

A fourth strategy, transitions to Kindergarten will be supported through the development of a Community Transition Toolkit led by Transition Specialist who will be hired by the department of education and distributed to local education agencies (LEAs) who apply for mini-grants awarded by OPSR. Up to 100 organizations will be awarded grants to plan transition support for the 2020-21 school year, which they can begin implementing at the beginning of the 2020 calendar year. Activities in this toolkit will increase parent knowledge of procedures for enrollment, participation and expectations of skills to prepare children for Kindergarten. The toolkit will include a section focuses on transition practices for children with disabilities.

Refer to Work Plan and Organizational Capacity and Management for procurement and administration procedures; Budget Narrative for detail of expenditures

Total Budgeted Amount: \$1,560,184

Criteria 3. *Describe plans to promote involvement by and engagement of parents and transition for their children from birth through preschool, and into Kindergarten. (0-2 points)*

Family perspectives were gathered prior and during the development of this application.

Perspectives gathering is planned during the needs assessment and strategic planning process to

ensure family voice informs the design of future activities and system improvements, and strategies to use this information to create a better understanding in community programs that support families will be embedded in the public awareness campaign. *Ready to Learn* is an existing low-cost initiative available through public libraries, specifically focused on enhancing parent knowledge to support learning for three and four year olds. Expanding *Ready to Learn* with infant toddler strategies and increasing awareness of this resource will facilitate engagement of families not participating in formal early childhood programs. Developing a strategy for citizen-led community groups will provide a replicable model for meaningful family engagement. Expanding awareness and skills to engage parents in transition planning and facilitating smooth transitions from birth through school entry.

Maximizing parent choice and family engagement strategies will be informed by health-related experts in Medicaid, Title V Maternal and Child Health, Healthy Start, Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), and WIC programs; disability experts in Early Intervention (IDEA Part C) programs; and early care and education experts in child care, Head Start and pre-k programs; and community organizations such as public libraries, public schools, mental health centers and faith-based organizations. This expertise will ensure all activities adequately represent accurate information and appropriately inform and engage families with these resources. Most of these programs have been actively involved in the development of this application.

ACTIVITY FOUR: SHARING BEST PRACTICES

Goal: Increase program quality, collaboration and efficiency by leveraging partnerships and building capacity to reach the most vulnerable and underserved children and families.

Criteria 1. *Clear description of how the state will address the required activity. (0-3 points)*

The goal of sharing best practices to increase program quality, collaboration and efficiency will be achieved by leveraging partnerships, both within the state and with national experts and

partners. Oklahoma will take this opportunity to learn successful strategies from other states to inform systems improvement strategies. Capacity will be increased to reach the most vulnerable and underserved children and families, and to support transitions between early childhood programs and into school entry by providing training to increase front-line provider skills and to build skills for supervisors and consultants to coach, mentor and consult with providers, especially those who serve the most vulnerable children and families. Success will be measured in part, by creating opportunities for early childhood providers to achieve a best practice standards of 15 clock hours, a standard not currently available to all providers in the system. The workforce analysis conducted for the needs assessment will inform action steps for a five-year professional development plan. Stakeholder feedback gathered for this application reported that not all early childhood professionals have access to high-quality training in effective classroom instruction, child behavior management and supporting positive adult-child interactions to promote language and cognitive development. A need has been identified through the CCDBG plan to strengthen infant-toddler competencies and stakeholders indicated classroom teachers need support through coaching and mentoring, as training and materials alone do not equate with increase instructional quality. Strategies and activities identified in this section are designed to leverage partnerships, improve efficiencies and build capacity by sharing best practices. Implementation of some of these strategies are described in Activity Five. The Professional Development Leadership Team (page 36) will guide and inform the strategies and activities described in the work plan. A one-year, cross sector professional development plan will build upon and expand capacity to implement evidence-based practices and increase opportunities for training, coaching, mentoring and consultation. Training will be designed to support inclusion of the target population, so when they are enrolled, they are able to stay enrolled and learn. This

plan will reduce common barriers to professional development, which include cost, availability, accessibility and relevance to job duties. Successes and challenges will inform a plan for the subsequent PDG B-5 application. This activity will begin upon award and continue through the 12-month project period.

Criteria 2. *Describe the plan to share best practices among early childhood care and education program providers. (0-2 points)*

The plan to share best practices among early childhood care and education program providers will increase collaboration and efficiency of services and include strategies to improve transitions across programs into elementary school.

The first strategy is to prepare and distribute a cross-sector professional development training calendar and one-year plan to share best practices. Financial resources and technical expertise will be leveraged by identifying opportunities to combine or consolidate trainings to reduce duplication of efforts when possible. The calendar will be shared among the Participating State Agencies' networks and posted on the Center for Early Childhood Professional Development website.

The second strategy is to conduct eight, one-day regional trainings. Stipends of \$200 will be provided to up to 1,000 early childhood professionals to attend one of the regional conferences to cover travel and encourage participation. The conferences will improve quality in Oklahoma's mixed delivery system by offering training that meets training requirements, and will focus on identified gaps in skills in positive adult-child interactions, infant-toddler care, challenging behaviors, disabilities, trauma-informed care, meaningful use of assessment data, transitions and additional topics as informed by the needs assessment. Professional development opportunities sponsored by OPSR, Participating State Agencies and other state partners to support training

requirements will be leveraged as match and include the OPSR Early Childhood Research Symposium, and education department sponsored Step Up to Succeed Leadership, First Year Teacher and Trauma Summit.

The third strategy is to create a cross-sector coaching and mentoring training module will be developed and 40 classroom coaches will be trained to pilot the model, as described in Activity Five. Stipends to support attendance will be offered.

The fourth strategy is to increase competence and expand capacity of the existing workforce to increase skills in classroom management, coaching, mentoring and consultation by providing specific training in researched and proven methods. Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (ECMHC) training, based on the Georgetown University model, will be conducted with 40 existing and new mental health consultants. An existing network serves only child care centers with subsidy contracts, creating gaps in support for children in other types of programs. Maintaining enrollment in center based programs is a challenge for some children and families. ECMHC providers will be trained in the most current model of mental health consultation and be supported through monthly reflective supervision. Implementation of an enhanced strategy to deliver ECMHC is described in Activity Five. Program of Infant Toddler Care (PITC) training will be provided to 50 infant toddler providers. PITC is a relationship-based curriculum currently required for providers who participate in the Oklahoma Early Childhood Program (OECPP) See Mixed Delivery Description. Six policies anchor PITC: primary care; small groups; continuity; individualized care; cultural responsiveness; and, inclusion of children with special needs. These policies will ensure that center based programs are inclusive, effective and responsive to the needs of infants and toddlers. LENA Grow: Training will be provided to up to 20 early childhood, speech pathology, center Directors or other professionals to implement a *LENA Grow*

pilot as described in Activity Five. *LENA Grow* utilizes an innovative technology to measure and improve the talk environment in infant and toddler classrooms. The program includes “talk pedometers” that measure the amount of interactive talk that each child in a classroom is exposed to, data reports, supporting materials, and professional development. The program provides objective measurement of children’s language environments without introducing additional assessments and can help parents also become more aware of the power of early talk.

Refer to Work Plan and Organizational Capacity and Management for procurement and administration procedures.

Total Budgeted Amount: \$1,419,784

Criteria 3. *Identify partnerships and how the State will provide systematic Statewide technical assistance to local communities and community-based organizations. (0-2 points)*

The OKFutures project will leverage knowledge from existing and exemplar high-quality and effective programs such as those provided by tribes, Early Head Start Child Care Partnership Grantees, the Oklahoma Early Childhood Program (OECF), Educare and Tulsa’s BEST initiative (See mixed delivery description for expanded descriptions). These programs have features of quality that exceed state standards, successfully layer funding, are successful due to their public/private partnerships. Building upon these best practices by expanding coaching and mentoring and infant toddler curriculum makes good sense as next steps to expand quality program delivery in the state for more children and to provide rationale for sustainable funding.

Technical assistance opportunities will be created through partnerships between state-funded mental health and child guidance providers with early care and education providers through training in ECMHC and *LENA Grow* and by supporting pilots as described in Activity 5. The Professional Development Leadership Team and the OPSR Board will explore strategies to

create sustainable regional technical assistance centers and will prepare a plan for a subsequent PDG B-5 grant to address a broader network of technical assistance through increased collaboration and building capacity with existing resources.

ACTIVITY FIVE: IMPROVING OVERALL QUALITY

Goal: All early care and education programs are high-quality

Criteria 1. *Amount of time that will remain after the needs assessment and strategic plan are completed, Clear description of how the state will address the activities. (0-4 points)*

The needs assessment and strategic plan will be completed and submitted to the Administration for Children and Families by July 30, 2018. This leaves just under six months remaining in the project period following approval to implement quality improvement activities as described in this section. During the first seven months, the needs assessment and strategic planning process will create a plan to impact 1) system goals to improve governance structures that promote coordination and alignment across programs and create efficiencies, effective use of data systems to inform quality improvements and investments, and policy and legislative reforms to reduce disparities and promote family self-sufficiency 2) program/provider goals to enhance workforce competencies and increase program quality, and reach the most vulnerable and underserved families and 3) family/child goals to ensure access to health care, participation in high-quality early learning experiences and family support and education, particularly for the most marginalized families. The initial approach to address these goals during this limited time frame is to consider activities that are feasible, will build capacity for sustainable supports and will provide the foundation for a seamless transition into a future PDG B-5 application. Consideration of alignment between ESSA goals, Striving Readers grant, CCDBG, and MIECHV occurred in the development of activities for improving quality. Additionally, this activity will be informed

by the needs assessment and strategic plan, and will build upon Oklahoma's high-quality program models for pre-k, Early Head Start Child Care Partnerships, Educare and Oklahoma Early Childhood Program to increase participation for children and families who are the most vulnerable and underserved. Refer to Work Plan and Organizational Capacity and Management for procurement and administration procedures.

The following activities will be accomplished between Aug. - Dec., 2019. These activities will implement pilot programs as a result of capacity building trainings conducted under Activity 4.

Implement Classroom Coaching Pilot: Implement contracts with 40 trained individuals to provide coaching/mentoring with up to five classrooms, at least one time per month per classroom between August and December, 2019. Identify and collect baseline data on instructional practices will be identified in the training module and evaluation of the impact of coaching on instructional practices and costs for expansion will inform future grant proposals.

Expansion of Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (ECMHC) Network

Implement contracts with community health centers, private providers and public health programs for at least 20 early childhood development specialists, behavioral health providers and psychologists to provide mental health consultation in up to 60 classrooms. Challenging behaviors are most frequently expressed as a concern for classroom teachers, yet ECMHC is only available to child care centers with subsidy contracts, funded through the CCDBG block grant. ECMHC services will be available to Head Start, Early Head Start, pre-k, SoonerStart, non-child care subsidy child care centers, and family child care homes. A plan to implement a pilot project to with new programs (outside of centers with child care subsidy contracts) will be developed. Grants will be available to programs receiving consultation to develop of a MOU between the ECMHC and the program and support technology as needed to expand access to

remote areas. Data collected will inform expansion of this network in future grants and funding opportunities.

Pilot LENA Grow: Increasing interactive talk in a classroom is an effective and proven practice to build language and cognitive skills in young children. Providing simple, concrete instructions to increase interactions supported by concrete feedback on progress builds sustainable skills for early childhood program providers. Oklahoma will implement and evaluate *LENA Grow* in 5 classrooms with 50 children for 12 weeks. Trained *LENA* coaches will support the implementation of these evidence-based strategies. Data collected will inform expansion this strategy in future grants and funding opportunities.

Improving Overall Quality through Systems Planning

The OPSR and Participating State Agencies will review recommendations from the needs assessment and strategic plan to identify systems level recommendations to improve overall quality. Despite the creation of the OPSR charged with improving coordination of the overall system, Oklahoma's early childhood programs continue to operate programs as separate administrative structures with few efforts to create true systems efficiencies. Effective early childhood systems must have an effective governance structure to coordinate and finance the system, have should have aligned and coordinated standards, integrated data systems and streamlined monitoring and accountability systems. During the last six months of the project period OPSR and Participating State Agencies under the Quality Improvement Team will convene to address these system challenges, seek consultation with external experts to guide recommendations and inform strategies to accomplish these desired outcomes in the subsequent PDG B-5 application. Recommendations for a toolkit to layer funding and improve coordination will be developed. By the end of the grant period, the OPSR Board in conjunction with the new

Governor's office will identify priorities for system level changes and outline a clear plan of action.

The Evaluation Team described in Organizational Capacity will review results from the needs assessment and strategic plan to develop a request for proposal for evaluation of system, and program quality and effectiveness and child-level indicators of success for a subsequent PDG B-5 application.

Criteria 2. *Provide a rationale for each Improving Overall Quality activity. (0-4 points) -*

OPSR is confident that the activities identified are feasible, realistic and will inform quality improvement efforts in Oklahoma. Rationale has been articulated within each activity above. In years 2-4, Oklahoma will seek funding to expand existing quality and engagement strategies to additional communities in Oklahoma. The data collected and actions identified will inform Oklahoma's plan for a subsequent PDG B-5 application.

Total Budgeted Amount: \$686,184

Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five
Year One - Date of Award – December 30, 2019

Activity 1: Needs Assessment				
Goal	Objective	Activity	Timeline	Person(s) Responsible
		<u>Procurement</u> : Participating State Agencies inform content of RFPs and contracts; OPSR staff issue requests for proposals and contracts; OPSR monitor contracts, review invoices and issue payments; applies to each of the following activities.	January 1 - Feb. 28, 2019	OPSR Participating State Agencies
To provide a clear understanding of early childhood needs in Oklahoma.	To obtain data from a minimum of ten sources to be included in the needs assessment by the end of April 2019 as measured by the number of data points used.	<u>Data Collection and analysis</u> : Researchers collect and analyze administrative data, program cost analysis, funding, policy and governance analysis, workforce analysis, develop surveys, focus groups, and story gathering processes, conduct system and participant analysis. Community organizations facilitate collection of surveys, organize focus groups, and collect stories. Participating State Agencies and leadership teams will oversee content, provide data, and verify accuracy.	Date of contract - April 30, 2019	In- and Out-of-State University Researchers; Participating State Agency evaluators; Oklahoma Policy Institute; Tribal Consultants; Community organizations Leadership Teams OPSR
		Review and analyze existing needs assessment data on systems coordination, participation, identified gaps in services, alignment, analyze gaps and needs.	January - April 30, 2019	
		<u>Report Development</u> : OPSR will develop a contract for expert to synthesize existing needs assessment with new data to inform action steps for the strategic plan to improve outcomes for the target population.	May-June 30, 2019	

		Create an unduplicated count of children across all systems. -Contract with Business Analyst for a Data Systems Assessment. Unduplicated count of enrollment in pre-k and Head Start programs through contract with OMES.	January - December 30, 2019	OSDE OMES OPSR Business Analyst
Activity Two: Strategic Plan				
Oklahoma's strategic plan creates an equitable and sustainable system for improving developmental and academic outcomes for children, especially those who are most vulnerable and underserved.	Create a five-year strategic plan with one or more action steps for at least five priorities identified as gaps in the needs assessment by the end of June 2019.	Review and consolidate existing strategic planning documents; integrate federal and state program requirements; identify priorities based on data and requirements; draft components for desired plan.	January-May, 2019	OPSR Participating State Agencies Leadership Teams Consultant/facilitator
		Convene strategic planning sessions in at least eight geographically diverse communities.	April - June 30 2019	OPSR PDG B-5 Teams Tribal Partners Community Representatives
		<u>Report Development:</u> OPSR will develop a contract for expert to develop a 5-year strategic plan. Submit needs assessment and strategic plan to ACF	March - July 31, 2019	
Activity Three: Maximize Parental Choice and Knowledge				
Increase parental knowledge of early childhood resources within Oklahoma's mixed delivery system.	Increase in parent engagement as measured by social media analytics	<u>Marketing Campaign Development:</u> Contract with national firm to develop messages that resonate with low-income parents, informed by early childhood experts in Oklahoma and parents; Translate message and ensure ADA accessibility	March-May 2019	OPSR Participating State Agencies PDB B-5 Family and Community Engagement Leadership Team Tribal Consultant
		<u>Media Marketing:</u> Contract with local firm to distribute messages through a variety of media,	May - December	OPSR Community Partners

		collect data to measure engagement Office of Management and Enterprise Services to update Participating State Agencies' websites with parent engagement messages	2019	PDG B-5 Family and Community Engagement Leadership Team
	At least 100 low-income parents participate in community-based family engagement activities by December 2019 as measured by grant reports.	Enhance website and materials to expand capacity of existing collaborations - OETA and Public Libraries Ready to Learn - Tulsa Educare Read, Sing, Play Grants offered to Public Libraries to implement family engagement practices; Create a module for community-based family engagement using Networks of Opportunity Model	February - May, 2019	OPSR Family and Community Engagement Leadership Team Community organizations
		OSDE Hire Transition Specialist Develop Community Transition ToolKit Develop Webinar and offer grants to 100 LEAs Tribal consultants and translators	June-December 2019	
Activity Four: Sharing Best Practices				
Increase program quality, collaboration and efficiency by leveraging partnerships and building capacity to reach the most vulnerable and underserved children and families.	To provide at least 1,000 Oklahoma Early Childhood service providers with a minimum of 15 hours of professional development by the end of the grant as measured by attendance records.	Create a cross-sector professional development 2019 training event calendar for posting on Participating State Agency websites Create a one-year cross-sector professional development plan to address gaps and expand professional development, coaching, and mentoring options for early childhood providers.	January - March 2019	OPSR PDG B-5 Professional Development Leadership Team

		<p>Conduct eight regional conferences geographically distributed across the state focused on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - improving adult-child interactions, - managing challenging behaviors, - trauma-informed care, - gaps identified in needs assessment. <p>Provide stipends to up to 1,000 early childhood providers to attend regional or other state conferences.</p> <p>Secure facilities and speakers, purchase professional development materials.</p>	July - Nov. 2019	OPSR PDG B-5 Professional Development Leadership Team Consultants
		Conduct Leadership Training, First Year Teacher Training, and Trauma Summit for early childhood professionals.	July - December 2019	OSDE
		Early Childhood Research Symposium.	January 2019	OPSR
	Develop cross-sector coaching/mentoring and consultation module and provide training to at least 40 providers to meet the needs of early childhood workforce	<p>Develop cross-sector coaching and mentoring training module.</p> <p>Train at least 40 coaches to pilot coaching and mentoring module.</p> <p>Offer stipends to support attendance.</p>	March - December 2019	OPSR PDG B-5 Professional Development Leadership Team

	Provide specific training in researched and proven methods to increase competence and expand capacity of the existing workforce to increase skills in classroom management, coaching, mentoring and consultation	<p>Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (Georgetown Model) to 40 existing and new providers: Contract with child guidance, mental health and private providers to support Head Start, PreK, SoonerStart, Family Child Care Homes.</p> <p>Program of Infant Toddler Care (PITC) professional development to 50 infant toddler providers.</p> <p>LENA Grow training to up to 20 early childhood, speech pathology, center directors or other professionals.</p>		
Activity Five: Improving Quality				
All early care and education programs are high-quality	Implement Classroom Coaching pilot by December, 2019 as measured by attendance records	<p>Cross-sector training, coaching, mentoring module</p> <p>-Implement contracts with 40 trained individuals to provide coaching/mentoring with up to five classrooms.</p> <p>Identify and collect baseline data on instructional practices.</p>	August - December 2019	OPSR PDG B-5 Professional Development Leadership Team
	Mental Health Consultation is provided to at least 60 Head Start, pre-k classrooms, SoonerStart or Family Child Care Homes as evidenced by invoicing from providers	<p>Georgetown Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation Model</p> <p>-Implement contracts with community health centers, private providers and public health programs for at least 20 early childhood development specialists, behavioral health providers and psychologists to provide mental health consultation.</p> <p>- Provide grants for technology and training to support web conferencing to expand access to remote areas</p>	August 2019 - December 2019	OPSR PDG B-5 Professional Development Team

		- Collect data to inform expansion.		
	Increase talk time and turn-taking skills in adult-child interaction as measured by data collected on interactions in at least 5 classrooms or family child care homes	Implement LENA Grow in 5 classrooms with 50 children for 12 weeks. -Contract with five coaches to serve underserved populations as measured by the needs assessment. - Collect data to inform expansion.	August - December 2019	OPSR PDG B-5 Professional Development Leadership Team
	Develop at least five concrete recommendations to create program alignment of quality standards, assessments, curriculum, monitoring and data systems as evidenced in a report completed by December, 2019	-Review recommendations from needs assessment and priorities in strategic plan -Contract with an expert consultant on quality program alignment to create efficiencies and reduce redundancies Refine the strategic plan with alignment activities defined	August - December 2019	OPSR PDG B-5 Quality Improvement Leadership Team
	Create a system improvement evaluation plan by December 2019	Develop Request for Proposal for evaluation of system and program quality and effectiveness and child-level indicators of success for subsequent PDG B-5 application.	Nov. 2019	OPSR PDG B-5 Evaluation Leadership Team

SECTION II: ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY AND MANAGEMENT

Criteria 1. *The responsibilities and roles of the lead entity's staff and its partner(s) are clearly described and substantiated, allowing them to meet the requirements of the program. (0-2 points)*

RESPONSIBILITIES AND ROLE OF OPSR AND PARTICIPATING STATE AGENCIES

OPSR is designated as the lead entity for the PDG B-5. Written in state statute as the State

Advisory Council, Governor Mary Fallin recognized OPSR's 15 years of demonstrated experience in convening early care and education stakeholders, engaging parents and influencing policy makers to lead improvements in Oklahoma's birth to five early childhood system.

Through the leadership of OPSR, state agency program leaders (page 4) convened weekly to plan Oklahoma's OKFutures application. They facilitated communication within their agencies, participated in a PDG B-5 stakeholder meeting with 80 attendees and identified match within their organizations in support of this project. OPSR engaged parents, philanthropic leaders, tribal representatives, policy organizations (Kids Count), members of the state legislature, the three gubernatorial candidates, members of the OPSR Board and national experts in early childhood in the development of the application. OPSR's ability to quickly convene and gather input from a wide and diverse audience demonstrates a strong commitment from our partners. OPSR will leverage these partnerships to implement the OKFutures project.

See Appendix 4

Due to the comprehensive nature of this project and the short time frame within which to accomplish the intended goals and objectives, five Leadership Teams and staff, each with a specific focus and expertise, will guide the development and implementation of project activities.

E-LEaD Team: The Early Learning Equity and Diversity team is an existing team of diverse leaders formed under Project HOPE (Harnessing Opportunity for Equitable Early Childhood Development). The OKFutures project seeks to increase equitable opportunities for low-income and disadvantaged children to reduce disparities. In order to do so, equity must be considered in all aspects of the project. This team will have the training and knowledge to weave equity into the project throughout the one-year grant period.

Lead: OPSR

Family and Community Engagement Team: This team will inform the needs assessment and strategic plan and will be responsible for Activity Three: Maximizing Parent Choice and family engagement strategies in Activity Five. The team will oversee the development of communication strategies, family engagement strategies, inclusion activities, community systems building and transition plans. This team will develop a plan for family engagement for the subsequent PDG B-5 application.

Co-Leads: Department of Health, Department of Mental Health, Tribal Early Childhood Expert, Transition Specialist (Department of Education).

Professional Development Team: This team will inform the needs assessment and strategic plan and will be responsible for Activity Four: Sharing Best Practices and pilot projects in Activity Five. This team will oversee planning of a cross-sector professional development plan, address gaps, develop training plans for coaching and mentoring, shared services and monitor continuing education hours. This team will prepare a comprehensive plan for professional development for the subsequent PDG B-5 application.

Co-Leads: Child Care Services (Center for Early Childhood Professional Development, Child Care Resource and Referral), Department of Education, Head Start

Quality Improvement Team: This team will inform the needs assessment and strategic plan and will be responsible for Activity Five: Quality Improvements. This team will be responsible for systems level review of policies, practices, oversight, data systems and costs. This will identify and reduce inefficiencies, increase effectiveness of programs, identify sustainable funding, policy alignment and other issues that emerge through the needs assessment and strategic planning process. They will support the implementation of strategies to align program standards and monitoring practices to inform development of a toolkit for layering funding. This team will develop a systems improvement plan for the subsequent PDG B-5 application.

Co-Leads: OPSR, Oklahoma Commission on Children and Youth

Evaluation Team: This team will oversee the developmental evaluation process for measuring goals and objectives of the OKFutures project. They will be responsible for the design and development of the needs assessment and strategic plan. They will inform the project evaluation plan for the remainder of the first year and develop a three-year system evaluation plan for the subsequent PDG B-5 application.

Lead: University Evaluator

OKFutures Staff: Five positions will be added to OPSR to directly support OKFutures. They include one FTE Grant Manager responsible for all requirements of the grant, who will inform leadership teams and ensure the transparency of grant activities is effectively communicated with internal and external stakeholders. The grant manager will serve as point of contact to ACF on program activities, is responsible for reporting and will supervise staff directly hired to work on OKFutures grant. OPSR will hire three FTE Program Coordinators with expertise in family engagement, professional development and quality improvement. One Administrative Assistant

will be hired to facilitate scheduling of meetings, documentation of match reporting and support the Grant Manager.

OPSR Staff: PDG B-5 funding will expand the capacity of OPSR to accomplish its legislative requirements and all activities of OPSR will facilitate the implementation of OKFutures. Debra Andersen, Executive Director, will dedicate .75 FTE to OKFutures as match to provide overall administrative support and supervision. The remaining .25 FTE allows for time spent in non-allowable activities such as fundraising and other administrative activities as Executive Director. One FTE Program Director and one FTE Program Coordinator will facilitate OPSR Board related meetings and provide leadership for equity and community-based direction and ensure alignment with OKFutures. One FTE Community Relations Specialist will provide expertise to the development of public awareness activities and facilitate integration of messages in OPSR website and social media. One FTE Administrative Specialist will provide support to OPSR staff and OPSR Board and Foundation. One FTE Program Manager will provide data system integration support. This position is currently vacant due to a recent resignation.

OKFutures Participating State Agencies and Partners: Contracts will be issued to Participating State Agencies to assist with each of the five required activities as appropriate to their role. One position will be hired by the Oklahoma State Department of Education to serve as a Transition Specialist. The Participating State Agencies serve on the OPSR Board and are predominantly funded by federal, required state match or maintenance of effort. Therefore, contributions are not allowable to be reflected as match. See Budget Justification for specific details of staff support through grants and match contributions.

The implementation of this project reflects the strong partnerships among state leadership. OKFutures and OPSR staff will support logistics and coordination of all meetings and

communication between Leadership Teams, the OPSR Board and the OPSR Foundation. Leadership Teams will convene as needed to accomplish respective grant requirements. Collaboration between teams will occur through a joint meeting every other month. The OPSR Board will receive OKFutures updates from team leads at quarterly meetings, which are open to the public as required under the Oklahoma Open Meetings Act, to ensure transparency of OKFutures activities. The OPSR Foundation will be responsible for oversight and approval of all financial transactions of the project, ensuring that procurement policies are followed and expenditures adhere to applicable federal and programmatic regulations. The OPSR Foundation and the OPSR Board have a Memorandum of Agreement that details the respective organizations' collaboration and the segmentation of duties.

Criteria 2: *The lead entity and its partners have sufficient staff and experience. (0-2 points)*

OPSR Staff: Debra Andersen, OPSR executive director, has served in this capacity for eight years and has extensive experience providing leadership for state level partnerships to improve school readiness. Debra is knowledgeable of state and federal early childhood policy and regularly interacts with legislative leadership to promote and support best practices. Prior to joining OPSR, Debra was a program director at the health department, bringing 30 years of experience in managing federal grants, state funding, human resources and community-based initiatives. Existing staff have expertise in project management, community development, communication and financial management and will work with new staff hired for this project. OPSR's strength in leveraging experience with and knowledge of external partners will ensure efficient use of state level administrative resources. OPSR does not administer programs in the mixed delivery system, resulting in an ability to support an objective perspective for achieving outcomes in the best interest of Oklahoma's children and families.

OKFutures Partners: Collectively, Participating State Agency representatives bring capacity and experience in early learning and quality program standards; evidence-based practice; professional development; health; infant and early childhood mental health; trauma-informed care; home visiting programs; early intervention; and grant evaluation and administration. They represent programs of child care services, Head Start, pre-k, child guidance, SoonerStart, Maternal and Child Health, Resource and Referral, Professional Development Registry, systems of care/trauma informed care and Home Visiting. The Oklahoma Tribal Child Care Association and the Oklahoma Head Start Tribal Association convene tribal early childhood program managers across Oklahoma's 39 tribal organizations, 38 of which are federally recognized sovereign nations. Both associations have acknowledged and committed to working with OPSR in the implementation of OKFutures.

Criteria 3: *The applicant provides strong evidence of sufficient experience and expertise; in culturally and linguistically competent service delivery. (0-2 points)*

OPSR Capacity and Experience: OPSR, as the lead entity, has extensive experience in collaboration with partner organizations as a supporting organization to the OPSR Board. In addition to providing program experts, Participating State Agencies identified staff expertise to support OPSR in grant management and reporting. Together OPSR's experience and Participating State Agencies' capacity, allow OPSR to deliver services in a culturally and linguistically competent manner. Prior, similar systems improvement awards include:

1. Early Childhood State Advisory Council grant awarded by the Administration on Children and Families to improve the infrastructure of the State Advisory Council and make recommendations for systems improvements. Needs assessment and strategic planning were required in this application.

2. Child Welfare/Early Childhood Partnership grant awarded by the Administration for Children and Families to evaluate how young children in the child welfare system access early care and education services. Focus groups and systems analysis were conducted.

3. Data Systems Coordination and Kindergarten Assessment grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation to implement state level activities in Oklahoma's Early Learning Challenge application. Facilitation, surveys, professional development activities were conducted.

4. OPSR was selected by Nemours Health System (supported by Robert Woods Johnson Foundation) as one of four states to receive the Project HOPE grant to reduce disparities in birth to five early childhood systems. This grant combines technical assistance with state activities to create a more equitable system that meets cultural and linguistic needs of disadvantaged families. Segmentation analysis and community engagements are currently being conducted.

The OPSR Foundation has experience in financial administration of state, federal and private grants to community organizations, contracts with Universities, subject matter experts in state and nationally as demonstrated by successful administration of these projects.

As key partners of this project, in addition to providing program experts, Participating State Agencies identified staff expertise to support OPSR in grant management and reporting.

Collectively, OPSR and Participating State Agencies are committed to a successful OKFutures project.

Criteria 4: *The lead agency and its partners have the fiscal, administrative and performance management capacity to effectively administer grant funds. (0-2 points)*

Fiscal Capacity: The OPSR Foundation has demonstrated experience of successful administration of previous grants in similar scope and has procurement policies in place to effectively administer this grant in compliance with federal purchasing regulations for 501(c)3

organizations. The OPSR Foundation is not a state agency, therefore not bound to state procurement and hiring practices. This ensures that fiscal and administrative activities will be accomplished in a timely manner, such that proposed activities can be accomplished in the time allotted. OPSR will prepare the necessary documents for procurement prior to award of the grant so that, if awarded, OPSR can immediately begin the process of securing staff and contracts. The OPSR Foundation is responsible for approving and reviewing all expenditures during quarterly meetings. The OPSR Foundation Treasurer and President have the authority to grant approval for expenditures to ensure timely awards of contracts and expenditures. The OPSR Foundation contracts accounting services, annual audits and legal services to advise purchasing and contracts. It will expand each of these services to meet the requirements of this grant. OPSR Foundation contracts personnel services to the University of Central Oklahoma (UCO) for existing staff. State appropriations in support of the OPSR are contracted to UCO by the Department of Human Services, the lead state agency noted in the state OPSR legislation. Match identified by DHS will be added to this contract and purchases will be made through the university's procurement process under the direction of OPSR's Executive Director. This somewhat unique structure ensures multiple levels of fiscal oversight and transparency.

Administrative Capacity: The OPSR has extensive experience in administration, budgeting and expenditures of federal, state and private funding. Existing OPSR staff and Participating State Agencies will work closely with new staff hired for this project to ensure all administrative functions are appropriately completed.

Performance Management Capacity: The Evaluation Team (page 35) will be supported by OPSR and will monitor grant activities to ensure all grant reporting is collected and accurately reported to the Administration for Children and Families. This team will guide the development

of data collection and assist in the preparation of the narrative for grant reports. The Executive Director will ensure all grant expenditures are appropriate and adhere to this proposal.

SECTION III: DESCRIPTION OF OKLAHOMA'S MIXED DELIVERY SYSTEM AND VISION STATEMENT

Criteria 1: *Described the State's existing B-5 mixed delivery early childhood care and education system. (0-2 points)*

Oklahoma has a long-standing and well-earned reputation for investments in high-quality care, early learning and family support programs. The state is best known as consistently serving a high percent of 4-year-olds through universal public-school preschool; developing the nation's first quality rating and improvement system (QRIS) with a highly rated child care regulatory framework; and implementing a network of statewide evidence-based home visiting services, 15 years prior to the authorization of the federal Maternal, Infant, Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) grant. Oklahoma has maintained strong, bipartisan support for early childhood by sustaining an effective State Early Childhood Advisory Council through two gubernatorial terms as well as supporting the collective vision that improved early childhood outcomes and a stronger workforce are critical for the economic future of our state. We have strong, significant philanthropic investments in early childhood that have sustained Oklahoma's reputation through the opening of four Educare centers and provide substantial match to Oklahoma's Early Childhood Program. Numerous national research studies have validated the benefits of Oklahoma's programs in achieving high-quality early learning to inform state and national policy.

Despite these significant accomplishments, too many children in Oklahoma are in poor health and behind their peers in school. Once considered a leader in early childhood, a decade of historical state budget shortfalls coupled with an inability to secure federal early childhood

system improvement grants have taken a toll on Oklahoma's mixed delivery system. This exemplary, yet siloed system continues to lack a cohesive, modern framework informed by research and best practice. State resources have been diverted from prevention and infrastructure to respond to a lawsuit to improve Oklahoma's foster care system. Outdated, redundant compliance and monitoring systems create extra strain on program staff and administrators across the mixed delivery system. National rankings on wellbeing indicators consistently place Oklahoma near the bottom of all states. The result is fewer children in low-income households have opportunities for safe, stable and nurturing environments.

Today, the political and economic tide is turning. Oklahoma will elect a new Governor and fill all 101 House seats and 24 new Senate seats this Nov. The 2018 legislative session was highlighted by a heightened awareness and groundswell of support for education. Oklahoma teachers left their classrooms for nine days to demand more funding for education and did not return until they were successful. Many incumbent state legislators who did not support revenue raising measures lost in their primary elections. The PDG B-5 comes at a time when Oklahoma is poised to continue this grassroots momentum during the upcoming 2019 session, recognizing the value of early childhood as a vital component to a well-built education system.

PROGRAMS, POLICIES AND FUNDING

Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten Program (pre-k): Operated by the Oklahoma State Department of Education, Oklahoma is one of just nine states funding pre-k through the state aid formula with unrestricted eligibility and no cap on total funding. In 2017, 99% of school districts offered pre-k; 39,405 students were enrolled; 81% in full day and 19% in half day pre-k. In 152 districts, pre-k capacity is expanded through layering child care and/or Head Start funds. In 1993, SB 183 (70 O.S. §11-103.7) authorized school districts to offer pre-k for 4-year-olds. In 1998, HB 1657

(70 O.S. §1-114) entitled children who turn 4 on or before Sept. 1 to attend half-day or full-day pre-k with funded through the State Aid Formula. In 2016, the Oklahoma Academic Standards (OAS) included pre-k for the first time (70 O.S. §11-103.7).

Head Start/Early Head Start: In 2017, 20,542 children and 160 pregnant women were enrolled. The vast majority of these children (15,962) were ages 3 and over. In 2016-17, Oklahoma received \$115.2 million in federal Head Start/Early Head Start grants operated through 19 community-based organizations or schools. Fifteen American Indian Tribal organizations received \$29.3 million. The Oklahoma Head Start State Collaboration Office (OKHSSCO) is located in the Oklahoma Association of Community Action Agencies (OKACAA). OKHSSCO is overseen by the Oklahoma Department of Commerce (ODOC) through contract with OKACAA.

Early Head Start/Child Care Partnerships: Seven Oklahoma organizations administer nearly \$20 million in federal Early Head Start Child Care Partnership Grants with two of these programs operated by tribal organizations. These programs have expanded 1,376 slots. *Educare:* Four Educare programs operate in the state, three in Tulsa and one in Oklahoma City. A fifth center is planned to open in Tulsa in July 2019. Each Educare program serves 150-200 children a year. Educare funding is blended from federal (Head Start/Early Head Start/Child Care), state (Oklahoma Early Childhood Program) and private sources.

Oklahoma Child Care: The Oklahoma Department of Human Services (DHS) operates the state's child care licensing, Quality Rating and Improvement System (Reaching for the Stars) and the state child care subsidy program. With the reauthorization of CCDBG, the federal share of funding has grown to \$37 million Oklahoma's MOE share is \$10.6 million. Child Care Subsidy in Oklahoma is funded through a combination of sources including the CCDF block

grant, state funds, and TANF. Oklahoma provides subsidized care for 31,826 children ages 0-5. In June 2017, DHS licensed 3,317 facilities with total capacity of 122,253 children. Of these facilities, 46% were centers, providing 87% of the state's licensed care capacity. In 43 counties, there is no availability of child care higher than a 2-Star rating on the State's QRIS. Rules for the Oklahoma Reaching for the Stars are promulgated by DHS and approved by the legislature. State funds for Oklahoma's Maintenance of Effort are appropriated through the annual budgeting process by the legislature.

Tribal Child Care: DHS contracts with tribal child care programs to expand accessibility and supply of state-subsidized child care. Tribal families may choose to receive state-subsidized child care even if the tribe has its own subsidy program. DHS has cooperative licensing agreements with four tribes (Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, and Muscogee Creek), which allows for coordination with the licensing units representing these four tribes for acceptance of agency monitoring reports. Tribal child care programs may apply for star certification through the Reach for the Start rating system. All training listed in the searchable database (okregistry.org) and professional development requirements are available to Tribal organizations, Indian tribes, general public, school districts, parents, etc.

State-Administered Home Visiting: The Oklahoma State Department of Health (OSDH) administers the state's home visiting programs: Children First, SafeCare and Start Right. Program models are Nurse Family Partnership, Parents as Teachers and SafeCare Augmented. In 2017, the programs served 4,558 families with an annual investment of nearly \$14 million in federal state, and local funds OSDH recently received an additional \$7 million Maternal, Infant, Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) grant.

Tribal Home Visiting: The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma is the only current tribal MIECHV grantee in Oklahoma. The Parents As Teachers program model is delivered to and enhanced by culturally relevant activities for tribal members.

IDEA Part B and Part C: OSDE as the lead agency, contracts with the Oklahoma State Department of Health to deliver SoonerStart (Part C) and directly employs regional staff to ensure program compliance. The state investment is higher than many states demonstrating Oklahoma's commitment to supporting children with disabilities. Local school districts provide Part B services and many participate in pre-k programs. SoonerStart is designated in state statute (70 Oklahoma Statutes sections 13-121-13-129 (2001), as amended) as a collaborative model between health, education, human services and the Oklahoma Commission on Children and Youth.

Child Guidance: The Child Guidance Program provides center-based screening, assessment, parenting and treatment services to all families regardless of income on a sliding fee scale. The Oklahoma Child Care Warmline and the Oklahoma Child Care Mental Health Consultation network are administered through the Child Guidance Program, and these services are supported through the CCDF, and targeted to child care providers who receive subsidy payments.

Additional Mixed Delivery System Components: In considered of the mixed delivery system,

Oklahoma recognizes the role that many non-traditional early childhood programs play.

Nutrition programs such as the CCAFP and WIC are critical to support healthy development.

Libraries are valuable resources for families to access early literacy resources, and access to

internet and technology is especially valuable in rural communities. Health centers and

physicians are trusted sources for families in supporting their child's development. Finally faith-

based organizations of all denominations and religions are sources of important support and information to families of young children.

INTERAGENCY COORDINATION

Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness (described on page 2)

Oklahoma Commission on Children and Youth: The mission of the Oklahoma Commission on Children and Youth is to improve services to children by: facilitating joint planning and coordination among public and private agencies; independent monitoring of the children and youth service system for compliance with established responsibilities; and entering into agreements to test models and demonstration programs for effective services.

Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems: The Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS) grant is administered through Little Dixie Community Action Agency. The ECCS Impact Team works to promote and enhance early childhood services in McCurtain, Pushmataha, and Choctaw Counties, and has the goal of a 25% increase in age appropriate developmental health among the 3-year-old population. The Agency is an affiliate for the Help Me Grow System which promotes efficient and effective place-based early childhood systems.

Birth through Eight Strategy for Tulsa (BEST): BEST is a comprehensive, continuous and integrated initiative that focuses on families in the early years in Tulsa, Oklahoma. BEST knits together public and non-profit health, education, social service and criminal justice programs and services to create a seamless continuum of support in the first eight years of a child's life. The initiative launched in July 2017, with two dozen implementing partners, who reach parents and caregivers in diverse settings such as pediatricians' offices, center-based care, WIC clinics and schools to promote high-quality early learning experiences. Family advocates from the Tulsa Health Department provide ongoing personalized support to parents and caregivers to connect

them to services and resources that reflect their needs and desires. BEST builds on existing early childhood initiatives in Tulsa such as Educare; Talk Read Sing, a public awareness campaign directed at parents and caregivers; and implementation of statewide pre-k. Common goals exist between BEST and Oklahoma's PDG B-5 application around increasing opportunities for children from low-income backgrounds through stronger community partnerships, expansion of quality and increased program participation.

QUALITY IMPROVEMENT EFFORTS

Early Learning Standards: Oklahoma has aligned three sets of early learning guidelines and standards. Child care providers follow the Oklahoma Early Learning Guidelines for Birth through Two and Three to Five year-olds, Head Start implements Head Start Performance Standards, and Oklahoma Academic Standards are legislatively authorized for pre-k.

Quality Program Standards: Similarly, these three programs have standards for program quality that are separate, yet somewhat aligned. Professional competencies are identified for each of these three programs but are not aligned and compensation parity does not exist.

Comprehensive Assessment and Curriculum: Oklahoma has in place fragmented early learning assessment practices and is missing key elements of a Comprehensive Assessment System.

Health Promotion Practices and Family Engagement Strategies: Most Early Learning and Development programs in the state provide some elements of health promotion and parent engagement practices, with home visitation programs exhibiting stronger integration of these elements.

Effective Data Practices: Early childhood programs in Oklahoma are managed across several state agencies, each having separate data systems that were developed and are managed

separately. Individual agency data systems typically have the ability to track services for individual children, have some capacity to track training and credentials by providers, and are able to connect children to individual program sites. At this time, however, Oklahoma lacks the infrastructure for comprehensive cross-agency data connection.

Criteria 2. *Identify progress and successes, hurdles, challenges, and strategies. (0-2 points)*

PROGRESS IN OKLAHOMA'S EARLY CHILDHOOD MIXED DELIVERY

Many states aspire to be Oklahoma. The state has a comprehensive mixed delivery system and investments in four-year-olds that lead the nation with the percent of children served.

Oklahoma's ability to sustain high-quality program standards and high enrollment in pre-k during extremely difficult state budget cuts over the past eight years is a testament to the state's commitment to its early childhood services. During this time, Oklahoma made progress in revising licensing standards, passed laws to support and strengthen licensing. One example is a law requiring safe sleep training for family child care home providers. Oklahoma has historically layered funding to support high-quality full-day, full-year programming for four-year-old programs and recently through federal funding opportunities for Early Head Start Child Care Partnerships. Programs working collaboratively at the community level, sharing resources to improve services are not uncommon and strengths upon which to build through the OKFutures project.

HURDLES

Costs are most frequently reported as a hurdle for delivery of and access to high-quality early care and education programs. Child care providers who predominantly accept children receiving subsidy struggle to afford licensing and quality standards, citing operating expense, unstable and low reimbursement rates as a hurdle. Child Care subsidy is paid by attendance and not

enrollment. Parents who are low- or middle-income struggle to afford to pay for licensed child care. A married couple earning the state's median income can expect to pay between 10-12% for care for an infant. Families who qualify for subsidy state they cannot afford their copay; the income eligibility scale has not been revised since 2008. Head Start only serves 11% of four-year-olds and 15% of three-year-olds, leaving very low income families who do not meet eligibility with few early learning options. The department of education dropped requirements for professional development for pre-k teachers due to lack of school funding. Compensation parity is a national concern. In Oklahoma, compensation disparities exist within the system, with pay predominantly greater in public school pre-k, Educare and Oklahoma Early Childhood Program staff than child care and Head Start providers.

Unaligned learning, program and professional competency standards, monitoring, transition practices, suspension, expulsion, and discipline practices are a hurdle to creating a cohesive mixed delivery system and result in confusion and fragmentation in communities for providers and parents. Programs that attempt to layer funding to different standards and redundancies in oversight are cited as reasons for these partnerships to dissolve. Most schools don't choose to make the modifications required to meet minimum licensing standards to operate licensed after school programs. Recent legislation expanded the number of hours for license exempt care, further creating disconnects. For the 2018-19 school year, nearly 20% of school districts have adopted a four-day school week (cost was cited as the reason), creating challenges to layering Head Start with pre-k. Parents are understandably confused by the differing levels of eligibility, costs and accessibility of early learning opportunities.

A lack of a cohesive governance structure further creates challenges in improving coordination and alignment of programs, increasing overall system accountability, and barriers to efficiency

and fiscal sustainability. Because programs are administered in separate agencies, they compete for state funding rather than collectively craft a comprehensive early childhood funding plan. Individual programs tend to create internal systems for professional development without an overall plan for competencies and professional development shared across programs.

STRATEGIES

Strategies to improve quality are summarized as system strategies, program strategies and family/child strategies.

System strategies include creating governance structures to promote coordination and alignment across programs in quality standards and monitoring to create efficiencies, crafting a plan for effective use of data systems to inform quality improvements and investments, and identifying policy and legislative reforms to reduce disparities and promote family self-sufficiency. The Quality Improvement team of the OKFutures grant will leverage data collected from the needs assessment to inform the strategic plan on recommendations to create an effective governance structure to support program alignment and create cost efficiencies in the system.

Implementation of the CCDBG, ESSA and other federal program requirements/guidelines will be supported and leveraged to build system cohesion. A coordinated, comprehensive early childhood budget will be explored to create a sustainable funding plan. Recommendations for changes to Medicaid billing to support classroom-based interventions will be developed.

Appropriate use of incentives to enhance quality, improve transitions and participate in professional development will be developed. Program strategies include creating a cross-sector professional development plan that incorporates coaching and mentoring to build the capacity of the workforce and community partners with the purpose of supporting the inclusion of low-income and disadvantaged children in the mixed delivery system. The Professional Development

team will plan trainings to build capacity for a stronger workforce to support inclusion of children with behavioral or developmental challenges in early learning classrooms. The Quality Improvement team will develop a toolkit to support collaboration between center-based programs. In this toolkit, public schools will be provided guidance to consistently using the weighted rate in the school funding formula when layering Head Start and pre-k funding. Guidelines for developing MOUs between public schools and other early care and education programs will be developed to include procedures that clearly outline the lead organization receiving nutrition (CACFP) in mixed delivery classrooms and other collaboration strategies. Child care providers will be supported by Part C program staff to apply for the add-on subsidy rate when enrolling children with disabilities in their programs. Family Child Care Homes will be connected to trainings and opportunities identified to leverage home visiting program models or other in-home or online professional development to facilitate participation. The foundation for program quality improvement activities will align with the Oklahoma Early Childhood Program, Early Head Start Child Care Partnerships, Educare and BEST.

Improving outcomes for families and children will include strategies to decrease confusion for families about costs, eligibility, quality and access through a public awareness campaign. This campaign will create cohesive messages across all programs so that families have consistent messages no matter where they seek information. Ads, websites and social media strategies will be guided by the Family and Community Engagement team. Outreach and support to families who are not choosing to participate in or able to afford early care and learning programs will occur through health care providers, libraries, tribal programs and faith-based organizations. When more community-based providers understand the benefits of supported early learning and are able to communicate information, families will be better informed and able to provide

appropriate learning opportunities for their children. Low-income tend to struggle with maintaining consistent attendance in early learning programs, sometimes due child behavior or due to stressors in their lives. In conjunction with mental health and disability supports for inclusion, families will be referred by their providers to family support services when additional help is needed. Improvements as a result of these strategies will be monitored to inform continuous quality improvement.

Criteria 3. *Provide a vision statement and how the vision will increase quality, coordination, alignment, and efficiency. (0-2 points)*

VISION

Oklahomans have a history of working together to solve complex problems. The partners who convene under the umbrella of the OPSR partners are a group of willing, passionate individuals with collective goals and a desire for better outcomes for children and families. They are committed to work smarter through collaborations and system integrations to accomplish these goals. The process of developing this application spurred new thinking on opportunities to improve quality, coordination, alignment and efficiency of programs and services utilizing existing resources, creating stronger partnerships within the mixed delivery system and forming new partnerships with community-based organizations. These ideas are reflected in Activities Three, Four and Five. The PDG B-5 grant will provide much needed funding and serve as a catalyst for change. Oklahoma's vision is to create the country's most effective early childhood mixed delivery system by building seamless connections between existing resources, informed through a deeper understanding of gaps and inefficiencies to ensure low-income and disadvantaged children have equitable access to early learning opportunities. In order to move toward this vision, resources received during year one, OKFutures will gather the strategies above and meaningful data and family stories, create an executable strategic plan, improve

quality by sharing best practices across the system, enhance capacity within existing programs to provide supports for inclusion of vulnerable populations in programs, and build community capacity to maximize parental choice and knowledge.

Criteria 4. *Key partners and stakeholders to achieve the vision and activities. (0-2 points)*

PARTNERS AND STAKEHOLDERS

At the center of partnerships and implementation of the OKFutures grant is the OPSR Board and the Participating State Agencies who signed an MOU to commit to support for this project. Their involvement and roles are described in the Organizational Capacity and Management section of this application. OPSR connects with over 300 individuals each year through boards, committees and conferences, providing an opportunity to leverage partnerships to inform and implement the OKFutures project. The legislative duties of the OPSR include a responsibility to “Provide leadership at the state level to encourage communities to develop and improve school readiness opportunities at the local level to encourage and empower local communities.”

OPSR leaders believe that solutions are found in communities and by meaningfully engaging parents of young children to effectively implement quality improvements.

Oklahoma Early Childhood Program (OECF): OECF demonstrates Oklahoma’s ability and willingness to use state and private resources to create a network of high-quality early learning and development programs. It offers a holistic approach to early care that couples high teacher qualifications and ongoing professional development with a concern for families’ needs and economic success in their communities. Funding from the OECF provides classroom supports to enhance quality, including salary supplements for degreed teachers and additional staff to lower adult-child ratios. The program also supports construction projects, and the provision of training and supports to early childhood educators. Services are offered through a diverse network of

public schools, tribal care, non-profit providers, for-profit child care centers, Head Start agencies, Educare, and child care programs for teen mothers and technical institute students. During FY 2016, 2,446 children were served by enhanced funding available through the OECP. The program currently is funded by \$8.4 million in state funds appropriated through the State Department of Education and \$12.6 million in matching private funds. Created in 2006, enabling legislation (70 Oklahoma Statutes §10-105.4) requires the OECP program be offered in at least one rural and one urban area and that private funds match state funds on a two-to-one basis. The OECP offers services equivalent to Early Head Start.

For over 10 years, formal local early learning councils received state-funded grants through OPSR to create local solutions for school readiness opportunities. The councils, referred to as Smart Start Oklahoma, were initially supported by a \$2 million line-item appropriation to the Department of Human Services (DHS). In 2010, line-items were virtually eliminated and by 2017 OPSR experienced a cumulative reduction of 86%. These councils and many of the OPSR state staff were eliminated, leaving OPSR with minimal staff to support the board and maintain state level partnerships. The OKFutures project will provide an opportunity to rebuild relationships with community organizations to strengthen early childhood programs and family engagement efforts, engage philanthropic business partners to invest in quality improvements.

SECTION V: PROGRAM PERFORMANCE EVALUATION PLAN

A developmental evaluation framework, in which information is used to support learning, innovation, and change (Patton, 2011), is the approach that will guide the evaluation plan.

Overall, the focus will be placed on collaboratively selecting the best approaches to answer multiple questions throughout the first planning year. An emphasis will be placed on using the results not only to monitor progress but to inform continuous quality improvement.

The evaluation plan will be forged collaboratively by stakeholders. An evaluation expert, from one of the state's universities, will be contracted to co-lead and convene an Evaluation Team consisting of at least eight stakeholders representing key organizations including the Oklahoma Departments of Health, Education, Human Services, Mental Health and Head Start. OPSR will designate a staff member who will also serve as a co-lead of this Evaluation Team. In addition to developing a responsive, dynamic, and comprehensive evaluation plan, this committee will meet regularly to pose meaningful questions, identify relevant data sources, review results, generate data-based recommendations, and champion implementation of improvements.

Specifically, the Evaluation Team will meet at least quarterly and will:

Criteria 1: *Adequately takes into account the metrics necessary to examine proposed process, cost, and program implementation reporting. (0-2 points)*

1) Monitor development of processes for data collection, implementation, interpretation, and dissemination of needs assessment, (Quarter 1)

2) Monitor development and scope of strategic plan (Quarter 1)

Criteria 2: *Includes a refinement of the proposed logic model, aligned with the state's vision statement, and identifying proposed associated process indicators and outcomes. (0-2 points)*

Review logic model and strategic plan and assess alignment with Oklahoma's vision statement and needs assessment; suggest revisions and modification as needed to the OPSR School

Readiness Pathway indicators and proposed indicators and outcomes for this project (Quarter 1)

Criteria 3: *Examines existing data infrastructure, systems, and data elements aligned with proposed metrics and gaps in data needs in order to address proposed process and implementation reporting. (0-2 points)*

1) Identify existing data and new information needed to monitor processes and document outputs and outcomes; identify gatekeepers for existing data and forge relationships; develop strategy to collect new needed data for performance reporting (Quarter 1 and continuing)

2) Monitor progress towards project goals and objectives; specifically, investigate progress on projects goals of: increasing participation, expanding quality, strengthening community partnerships, expanding options for parents, and creating accountability (and their component activities as outlined in this application; Quarter 2 and continuing)

Criteria 4: *Identifies new data sources to complement, as necessary, program and service data to address proposed implementation reporting and plan for the development of a revised data system, as needed. (0-2 points)*

Generate data-based recommendations; disseminate these to multiple audiences (Quarters 3 and 4)

Criteria 5: *Thoroughly identifies an appropriate methodological approach that includes a strategy for data collection, sampling, measurement, and analysis including metrics of progress to inform continuous learning and improvement efforts related to implementation. (0-2 points)*

1) The methodological approach will emerge throughout the one-year project. The university co-lead will ensure appropriate methods, data sources, measurement, analysis and interpretation are

done and linked to the meaningful question posed by the committee. The Rapid Cycle Evaluation (RCE) Coach will be used when appropriate. If not, the expertise of the university co-lead will be relied upon. The Evaluation Team will generate strategies for continuous improvement and serve as the champions for CQI.

2) Implement a Rapid Cycle Approach: The RCE Coach will guide the committee through posing a question, identifying data sources, running analyses, interpreting results and generating a simple report to share with others. If other methodological approaches are needed, the committee can draw upon the expertise of the university co-lead and her/his network.

Criteria 6: *Incorporates findings from the needs assessment and the strategic plan. (0-2 points)*

1) Design and implement a process to ensure results inform quality improvement in funded activities (start in Quarter 2 and continuing)

2) Develop and refine an evaluation plan for current and future work using the input of federal technical assistance providers if awarded funding in year 1 (Quarters 2, 3, and 4).

The Evaluation Committee will conduct a portion of its work by using the RCE Coach tool developed by Mathematica through a contract with the U.S. Department of Education⁴. This new web-based, interactive tool is an easy-to-use evaluation resource that facilitates low-cost, quick-turnaround evaluations to produce the evidence program staff need to make decisions on programs and policies. RCE Coach will support the Evaluation Committee to pose evaluation questions, identify data sources, analyze and interpret data, compile and present results in user-friendly reports that can be shared with other stakeholders, and determine how to use results.

⁴ Mathematica Policy Research. Rapid-Cycle Tech Evaluations Accelerate Decision Making 2015-2017. Retrieved 10/26/18 from: <https://www.mathematica-mpr.com/our-publications-and-findings/projects/rapid-cycle-tech-evaluation>

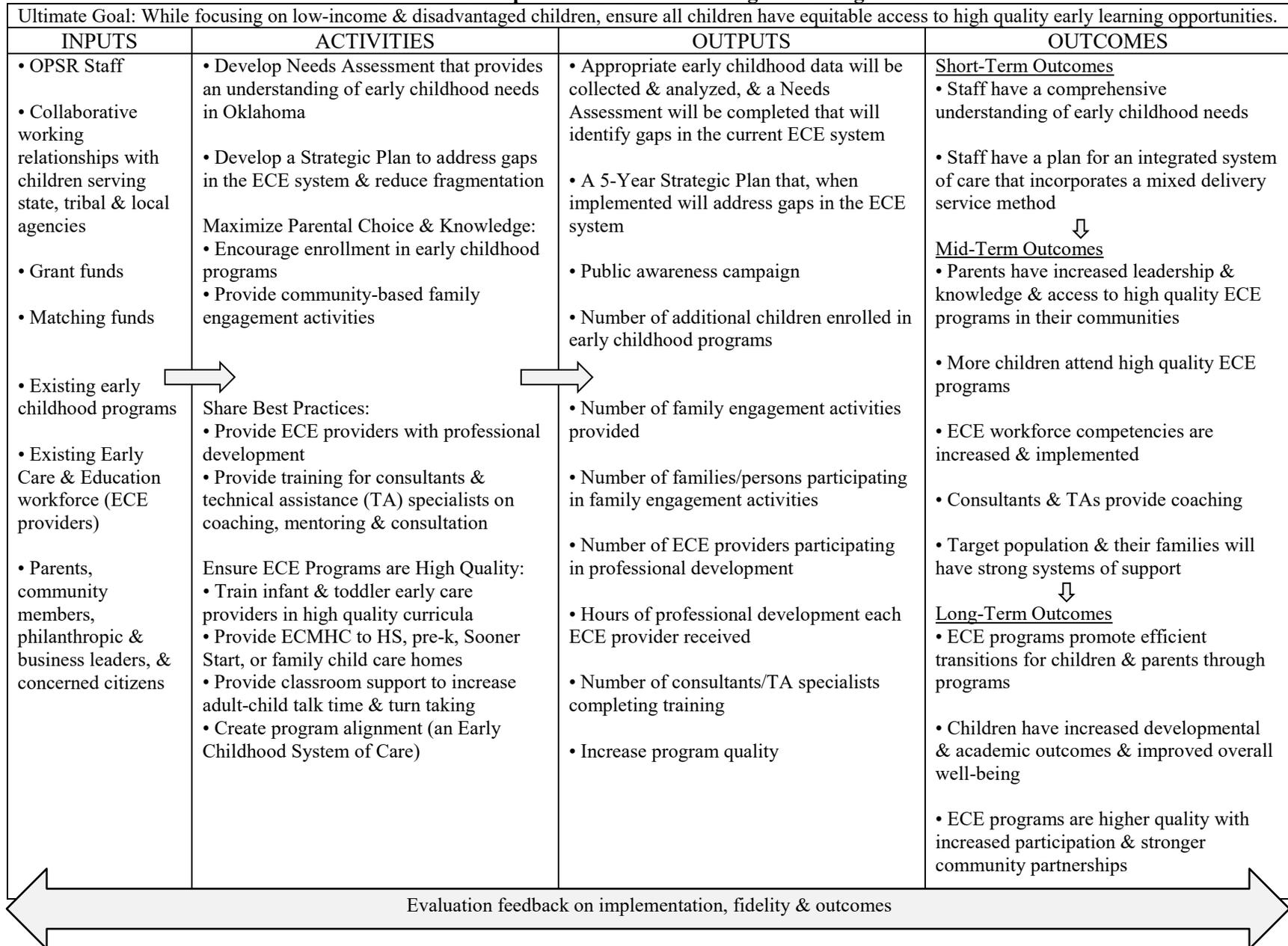
The overall Developmental Evaluation⁵ approach in concert with the use of RCE Coach⁶ and other tailored data collection and interpretation activities will position the Evaluation Team to be nimble in responsively generating questions and answers to guide the activities proposed in this application. The information and results generated by the Evaluation Committee will be incorporated into the quarterly performance report as required in the ACF PERFORMANCE PROGRESS REPORT ACF-OGM-PPR.

⁵ Patton, M. Q. (2011). *Developmental evaluation: Applying complexity concepts to enhance innovation and use*. New York, NY: The Guilford Press.

⁶ Mathematica Policy Research. *Rapid-Cycle Tech Evaluations Accelerate Decision Making 2015-2017*. Retrieved 10/26/18 from: <https://www.mathematica-mpr.com/our-publications-and-findings/projects/rapid-cycle-tech-evaluation>

SECTION VI: LOGIC MODEL

Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five: Logic Model



SECTION VII: SUSTAINABILITY

Criteria 1: *The applicant has provided a clear plan for sustaining key elements of their grant projects which have been effective in improving practices and outcomes for children and families, the key individuals and organizations whose support will be required to sustain these elements, and how their cooperation and collaboration will be maintained after federal funding ends. (0-4 points)*

The OPSR and Participating State Agencies will build capacity within OPSR and across state agencies to sustain coordination and collaboration focused on improving outcomes for young children and their families. Planning for sustainability from the beginning of the project will enhance opportunities for success, and visionary leadership will bring partners together to meet common goals. Sustaining quality improvements will require action and creativity in one or more areas: leadership, partnership and collaboration, implementation, communication, evaluation, and financing.

Leadership: Achieving systems change will require leaders with vision, skills, and knowledge of how to promote change within systems at the state governance level and communities.

Effective leaders articulate problems and describe solutions to engage stakeholders while guiding decision-making necessary for quality improvements. Leadership at the state agency, legislative and executive branch will be engaged to inform the needs assessment and strategic plan to create a cohesive governance structure for supporting cross-sector quality improvement policies, standards and financing. The OPSR Board, comprised of 15 state agency heads and 17 members appointed by the governor will be actively engaged in the development of a 5-year plan that will guide future system coordination and quality improvement strategies as assigned to the board in state legislation.

Partnership and Collaboration: Systems development strategies are more effective when connections are established early and cultivated regularly. Existing partnerships will be strengthened through this project and new partnerships will be formed to engage families and build capacity of the professionals in the mixed delivery system. These partnerships will help sustain program efforts beyond the project period.

Implementation: Excellence of systems improvements that includes capacity building and policy change efforts will create sustainable strategies without requiring continued funding. Oklahoma has lacked a cohesive plan for implementing quality improvement efforts and for building the capacity of providers and parents to support early learning. This project will result in the development of such a plan, build skills in providers and will reach and engage parents to inform the development of a permanent process to ensure cohesive, continuous quality improvements to the overall mixed delivery system.

Communication: Using communications and marketing skills to inform others about the mixed delivery system will be a key to creating and maintaining a base of support that will contribute to sustaining increased parent knowledge and choice in the mixed delivery system.

Evaluation Data: Measuring systems change is a challenge, and often evaluation efforts are focused on child and family outcomes, provider effectiveness or program performance. The process evaluation conducted for this project will inform future systems improvement efforts to think strategically about measurement and reporting of systems change efforts.

Financing: Sustainability is frequently equated with additional funding. While financing of system infrastructure support, program and professional capacity building and parent engagement is needed, by strengthening partnerships, identifying opportunities to leverage existing resources, creating a framework for efficient layering of funding and identifying

strengths and supports that exist within communities, less funding will eventually be required to sustain improvement efforts. Throughout the project, data gathered supporting the costs and benefits of high-quality programs and well-aligned systems will inform the need for future state and federal investments.

SECTION VIII: DISSEMINATION PLAN

The findings for *Oklahoma's Future Begins with Our Children* will be disseminated through multiple sources for the purposes of 1) informing the development or revision of policy and practice, 2) to inform professional development/training across early childhood sectors, and 3) to share the findings of the evaluation to guide improvements in policy and infrastructure in the future.

The needs assessment findings and five-year strategic plan recommendations will be presented to the OPSR Board, the Oklahoma Commission on Children and Youth and to other boards and commissions of state agencies and non-profits as requested. Said findings will be posted on the OPSR website and available to other Participating State Agency to link. The evaluation of the overall project will be presented to the OPSR Board. A final report of project accomplishments, findings, and recommendations will be prepared by the third party evaluator. This report will be provided to the Administration for Children and Families and will be posted on the OPSR website as well as partners' websites.

SECTION IX: THIRD PARTY AGREEMENTS

Refer to Appendix 2 for a shortened Memorandum of Understanding with signatures by Participating State Agencies. A full version of the MOU is available through OPSR upon request.



Mary Fallin
Office of the Governor
State of Oklahoma

August 20, 2018

Richard Gonzales
Director of Interagency and Tribal Affairs in the Early Childhood
Division of Interagency & Special Initiatives
Administration for Children and Families
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
330 C. Street SW
Washington, DC 20201

RE: Designation of Lead Agency

Dear Mr. Gonzales,

I am writing this letter to designate The Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness (OPSR) Foundation, Inc. as the lead agency for the Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five, Opportunity Number HHS-2019-ACF-OCC-TP-1379.

OPSR is responsible for leading Oklahoma in coordinating an early childhood system focused on strengthening families and school readiness for all children. The OPSR Foundation was authorized under state statute to receive public and private funding to assist in the implementation of the Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness Act of 2003 (Title 10 O.S. § 640). The OPSR Foundation assists in the support of the Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness Board, a public body designated as Oklahoma's Early Childhood Advisory Council. This 32-member board is comprised of 15 child-serving state agencies and 17 members appointed by the Governor. OPSR has a 15-year history of successfully providing state and community-level coordination to improve early childhood programs and services in our state.

I am confident that OPSR is well equipped to administer this grant. The OPSR Foundation successfully administered the three- year State Early Childhood Advisory Council grant under the authority of Section 642B (b)(1)(A)(i) of the Head Start Act 42 USC 9837 which was awarded in 2010.

We thank the Administration for Children and Families for this funding opportunity to ensure every child in Oklahoma has the opportunity to grow, learn and succeed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary Fallin".

Mary Fallin
Governor

OKLAHOMA PRESCHOOL DEVELOPMENT GRANT
Memorandum of Understanding

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is entered into by and between the Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness (“Lead Agency”) and the following departments (“Participating State Agency): Oklahoma State Department of Education, the Oklahoma Department of Commerce (lead agency for Head Start Collaboration Office), the Oklahoma Department of Human Services, the Oklahoma State Department of Health, the Oklahoma Commission on Children and Youth, and the Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services.)

I. BACKGROUND

The Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness Act of 2003 (O.S. §10-640) created a public-private partnership to improve coordination of existing programs at the community and state levels to increase their effectiveness and make them more cost-efficient. Within this enabling legislation, the Participating State Agencies (with the exception of the Department of Commerce) “shall make staff available to the Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness Board for the purpose of providing professional consultation and staff support to assist in the implementation of this act”. In 2010, the duties of the State Advisory Council as defined under the reauthorization of the Head Start Act of 2007 were legislatively assigned to the Lead Agency, further defining responsibilities for coordinating the early childhood system. The Preschool Development Grant provides Oklahoma an opportunity to secure federal funding to implement systems improvements in coordination with the Participating State Agency, thus facilitating accomplishments toward this goal.

II. PURPOSE

The objective of this memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is to foster collaborative strategies that result in

- Improved collaboration and coordination among existing programs of early care and education programs;
- Strengthened partnerships to improve coordination, program quality and delivery of services among all sectors supporting families with young children; and
- Increased parental choice and knowledge among a mixed delivery of program providers.

III. ASSURANCES

The Participating State Agency hereby certifies and represents that it:

- 1) Agrees to be a Participating State Agency to update and enhance Oklahoma’s statewide birth through five needs assessment of the availability and quality of existing programs.
- 2) Agrees to be a Participating State Agency to update a strategic plan that recommends collaboration, coordination, and quality improvement activities.
- 3) Agrees to be a Participating State Agency to collaborate with the Lead Agency in creating a campaign to increase parental choice in a mixed delivery system; share best

practices to enhance the effectiveness of the early childhood workforce and in implementing strategies to improve the overall quality of early childhood care and education programs.

- 4) Has all requisite power and authority to execute and fulfill the terms of this MOU.
- 5) Is familiar with the state's Preschool Development Grant application and is supportive of and committed to working on all applicable portions of the grant.

IV. SCOPE OF AGREEMENT

A. Participating State Agency Responsibilities

In assisting the Lead Agency to implement the tasks and activities described in the State's Preschool Development Grant application, the Participating State Agency will:

- 1) Implement the Participating State Agency scope of work as identified in the project work plan of the application;
- 2) Abide by the Participating State Agency's Budget described in the Budget Justification section of this application, if applicable, including funds from state, private and local sources, if any, that the Participating State Agency is using as match to achieve the outcomes identified in the Preschool Development Grant;
- 3) Actively participate in OPSR Board meetings and other Preschool Development Grant administration related meetings;
- 4) Post to any website specified by the Lead Agency, in a timely manner, all non-proprietary products and lessons learned developed using federal funds awarded under the Preschool Development Grant;
- 5) Participate, as requested, in any evaluations of this grant;
- 6) Be responsive to the Lead Agency requests for project information including the status of the project, project implementation, outcomes, and any problems anticipated or encountered, consistent with the Preschool Development Grant; and
- 7) Perform other duties as may be necessary to fulfill the requirement of the Lead Agency's Preschool Development Grant project.

B. Lead Agency Responsibilities

In assisting the Participating State Agency in implementing their tasks and activities described in the OPSR's Preschool Development Grant application and grant administration, the Lead Agency will:

- 1) Work collaboratively with, and support the Participating State Agency in carrying out the Participating State Agency scope of work as identified in the project work plan;
- 2) Award the portion of the Preschool Development Grant funds designated for each Participating State Agency in a timely manner in the project work plan during the course of the project period and in accordance with each Participating State Agency's scope of work, in accordance with each Participating State Agency's Budget and as identified in project work plan of the application;

- 3) Provide feedback on each Participating State Agency's status updates, any interim reports, project plans and products;
- 4) Keep each Participating State Agency informed of the status of the State's Preschool Development Grant project and seek input from each Participating State Agency, where applicable, through the governance structure outlined in the project work plan;
- 5) Facilitate coordination across Participating State Agency necessary to implement the project work plan; and
- 6) Identify sources of technical assistance for the project.

C. Joint Responsibilities

- 1) The Lead Agency and the Participating State Agency will each appoint a key contact person for the Preschool Development Grant;
- 2) These key contacts from the Lead Agency and the Participating State Agency will maintain frequent communication to facilitate cooperation under this MOU, consistent with the project work plan and governance structure;
- 3) Lead Agency and Participating State Agency personnel will negotiate in good faith toward achieving the overall goals of the Preschool Development Grant.

V. MODIFICATIONS

This Memorandum of Understanding may be amended or modified by either party providing sixty (60) calendar days notice to the other party. Any amendment to this agreement must be made in writing and submitted to the other party for review. The other party may review proposed modifications and shall provide a response to the other party within thirty (30) calendar days of receipt. Any amendment to this agreement must be signed by each of the parties involved and made in consultation with the Lead Agency.

VI. DURATION

This Memorandum of Understanding shall be effective, beginning with the date of the last signature hereon and, if a Preschool Development Grant is received by the State, ending upon the expiration of the Preschool Development Grant project period. If a Preschool Development Grant is not received, this agreement becomes null and void.

APPENDIX 2



*Documentation of Support for the Preschool Development Grant
Administered by the Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness*

This document ensures agreement among the undersigned state agencies regarding the Preschool Development Grant. All are committed to collaboration as set forth in the Memorandum of Understanding, are in agreement with the implementation of the program, and are dedicated to working together to improve early childhood services in Oklahoma.

Tom Bates

Tom Bates, Interim Commissioner
Oklahoma State Department of Health

Deby Snodgrass

Deby Snodgrass, Executive Director
Oklahoma Department of Commerce

Ed Lake for Director Lake

Ed Lake, Director
Oklahoma Department of Human
Services

Terri White

Terri White, MSW, Commissioner
Oklahoma Department of Mental Health
and Substance Abuse Services

Joy Hofmeister

Superintendent Joy Hofmeister
Oklahoma State Department of
Education

Debra Andersen

Debra Andersen, Executive Director
Oklahoma Partnership for School
Readiness

Annette Wank Jacobi

Annette Jacobi, Executive Director
Oklahoma Commission on Children and
Youth

APPENDIX 3

