

Nebraska Preschool Development Grant Application

Project Summary/Abstract

- Project Title: Elevating Nebraska's Early Care and Education
- Applicant Name: Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (Nicole Vint, Child Care and Development Fund Administrator)
- Address: 301 Centennial Mall S., Lincoln, NE 68508
- Contact Phone Numbers (Voice, Fax): 401-471-9208 (ph) 402-471-9286 (fax)
- E-Mail Address: Nicole.Vint@nebraska.gov
- Web Site Address, if applicable: <http://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/default.aspx>

Nebraska's early childhood system is noteworthy for its community-level leadership, and its innovations in infant-toddler services. This grant will allow it to build on those strengths, providing more options for parents with the support of strong community leadership and a well-aligned state system. Nebraska's work will start with an integrated needs assessment and strategic plan process, which will give it a more precise sense of its needs and set a direction for addressing those needs. We know that some communities are building amazing collaborations – but that others have much further to go, and need support to get there. Nebraska's process for developing the needs assessment and strategic plan will build on past analyses and stakeholder engagement, with a robust plan for collecting more insights from around the state and ensuring that the voices of families and communities shape the work ahead.

Nebraska's approach to parent engagement will be shaped by its community-level focus. Much of the state's work will be about creating tools to support community- and program- level work – and those tools will be developed by actively engaging parents. At the end of the grant period communities will have clear recommendations on how to provide parents with the information they want, and how to set up coordinated enrollment systems to make it easier for parents to access services. Parents will also have better information, including updated guidance for new parents provided after their child's birth.

Achieving the state's goals for young children also requires strengthening the support for professionals. Through the grant Nebraska will build the capacity of elementary school principals, provide support for improving curriculum and instructional materials, create targeted assistance for new providers, and work with existing providers to make the system more efficient.

The state will continue its progress toward having a data system that can inform decision-making, and through its evaluation of the grant's implementation will set up a continuous improvement cycle that can continue after the conclusion of the grant period.

Nebraska's early childhood community is proud of what it has accomplished and energized for the hard work ahead. Nebraska is requesting a Preschool Development Grant of \$5,853,683 to help it build on its successful efforts to create the next-generation system the state's children deserve.