



COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

Andy Beshear
GOVERNOR

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October 13, 2022

Stefanie Gordon
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Administration for Children and Families
Office of Administration
Office of Grants Management
26 Federal Plaza Room 4114
New York, NY 10278

Dear Ms. Gordon,

Thank you for this opportunity to apply for the federal Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five (PDG B-5) Renewal Grant funding to support Kentucky's innovative and ambitious plans for early childhood programs to continue transforming the commonwealth into the best place to start and raise a family. **I hereby designate the Kentucky Governor's Office of Early Childhood as Kentucky's entity that will have responsibility for execution and administration of this grant.**

The Kentucky Governor's Office of Early Childhood was chosen as best suited to manage the grant because the office serves as the umbrella organization that unifies partners for better alignment, coordination, efficiencies, and messaging to prevent fragmented funding for Kentucky. The mission of the Early Childhood Advisory Council, and its support office, the Kentucky Governor's Office of Early Childhood, is to provide leadership and direction for the Commonwealth of Kentucky through a comprehensive and sustainable prenatal to age five early childhood system that will ensure a strong foundation for all children.

In 2019, Kentucky Governor's Office of Early Childhood received and implemented a \$10.6M PDG planning grant. However, Kentucky was not awarded B-5 Renewal Grant. Still, Kentucky advanced the goals identified in the strategic plan developed under the PDG Planning grant. These were accomplished through a pandemic and while balancing multiple staff turnover. Some accomplishments included:

- Secured \$2 million from the Division of Child Care to expand Apprenticeship Portfolio
- Became one of the first states in the nation to establish an Administrator/Director Apprenticeship to elevate the early childhood profession. The inaugural class has over 70 practitioners from approximately 40 employers in childcare, public preschool and Head Start across the commonwealth
- Managed formal launch of revised Early Childhood Standards and state rollout; developed unified training and practical resources, including an interactive web-based tool for practitioners
- Refreshed companion piece to the Kentucky Early Childhood Standards for families and caregivers
- Increased investment more than 200% over one year for Kentucky's Regional Collaborative Network
- For the first time, defined and documented close to 10 data-driven strategies across the commonwealth-known as *Kentucky Bright Spots*
- Refreshed Early Childhood Profile and developed Companion Piece; nearly \$6 million is being allocated to help scale proven strategies
- Gained approval for close to \$8 million to be invested to grow early intervention to support a child's future mental health and build strong social and emotional skills

In applying for this three-year PDG renewal opportunity, we will work with and through our deep-rooted, cross-sector partnerships across the commonwealth to build upon initial grant strategies. Importantly, we will infuse funds to respond to needs that emerged and were exposed during the COVID-19 pandemic. Kentucky is ready and able to invest in strategies that support and strengthen the workforce, enhance high quality, expand access, to those in high- need communities, and create an early learning continuum from birth through third grade.

The pandemic spotlighted the negative consequences that come with fragmented funding streams and disconnected services. Yet, it has highlighted the profoundness of the original goals of the Kentucky Governor's Office of Early Childhood to promote greater collaboration, emphasize quality and continuous improvement to ensure more children enter kindergarten prepared. We are thrilled to submit this application to allow Kentucky to achieve the bold goal of being the best place to start and raise a family.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andy Beshear". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Andy Beshear
Governor