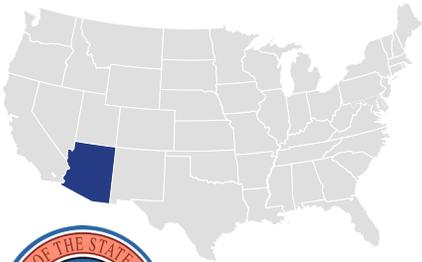


# PRESCHOOL DEVELOPMENT GRANTS

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## 2015 ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT

### Arizona





# U.S. Department of Education PDG Grant Performance Report Cover Sheet

Based on ED 524B OMB No. 1894-0003 Exp. 06/30/2017

Check only one box per Program Office instructions.  Annual Performance Report  Final Performance Report

### General Information

1. PR/Award #: S419A150009                      2. Grantee Federal Information Processing Code: 15-A

3. Project Title: PRESCHOOL DEVELOPMENT GRANT

4. Grantee Name: Arizona Department of Education

5. Grantee Address: 1535 W. Jefferson St. BIN #15

City: Phoenix                      State: Arizona                      Zip: 85007

6. Project Director Name: Nicol Russell

Title: Deputy Associate Superintendent

Phone #: 602.542.8706                      Ext.: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax #: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: Nicol.Russell@azed.gov

### Reporting Period Information

7. Reporting Period: From: 01/01/2015                      To: 12/01/2015

### 8. Budget Expenditures (To be completed by your Business Office. See instructions.)

Budget Period	Federal Grant Funds	Non-Federal Funds (Match/Cost Share)
a. Previous Budget Period	\$20,000,000.00	\$9,641,294.00
b. Current Budget Period	\$20,000,000.00	\$8,991,294.00
c. Entire Project Period (For Final Performance Reports only)		

### 9. Indirect Cost Information (To be completed by your Business Office. See instructions.)

a. Are you claiming indirect costs under this grant?  Yes  No

b. If yes, do you have an Indirect Cost Rate Agreement approved by the Federal Government?  Yes  No

c. If yes, provide the following information:

Period Covered by the Indirect Cost Rate Agreement: From: 07/01/2015                      To: 06/30/2016

Approving Federal agency:  ED  Other Specify other: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Rate: (Final Performance Reports only)  Provisional  Final  Other Specify other: \_\_\_\_\_

d. For Restricted Rate Programs (check one) -- Are you using a restricted indirect cost rate that:

Is included in your approved Indirect Cost Rate Agreement

Complies with 34 CFR 76.564(c)(2)?

### 10. Performance Measures Status

a. Are complete data on performance measures for the current budget period included in the Project Status Chart?  Yes  No

b. If no, when will the data be available and submitted to the Department? \_\_\_\_\_



# U.S. Department of Education PDG Annual Performance Report Executive Summary

Based on ED 524B OMB No. 1894-0003 Exp. 06/30/2017

Grantee State: AZ

PR/Award #: S419A150009

You are required to submit an Executive Summary of up to 3000 words with your Annual Performance Report. This summary should relate to your approved application and summarize the goals and objectives that have been achieved under your grant, what you learned, and any evaluation results. Describe any unanticipated outcomes or benefits from your project and any barriers that you may have encountered. If there have been any changes to the project from the approved application, those should be explained as well.

## Overview of Progress

In 2015, Arizona made significant progress in its efforts to expand access to high-quality preschool and to enhance early learning systems through participation in the Development Grant opportunity. We applied for and received \$20 million through this grant. In our original grant application we provided details on how the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) would partner with its sister agency, First Things First (FTF), to improve the quality and scope of early learning in Arizona. In 2015, this partnership helped to provide 3,024 slots, a combination of new and improved, for four year old children in 27 high-need communities (HNCs) in Arizona. These HNCs are spread across five counties and were selected based on four criteria. The data points used to select HNCs were: areas identified with high rates of students receiving free and reduced lunch; areas where more than 25% of the students served identified as being English language learners (ELLs); areas predicted to be serving less than 50% of their capacity based on ADE's K-3 enrollment formula; and lastly, the local education agencies (LEAs) in the HNCs must have earned a C or better on the State's A-F school report system.

In our original application we described how the grant would be used to increase the ability of preschool programs in the identified HNCs to access participation in the state's Tiered Quality Rating Improvement System (TQRIS), *Quality First* (QF). In 2015, 41 new early learning providers were able to participate in QF, 8 of which were programs that had been on a waiting list for participation. Participation in *Quality First* is essential to the success of the PDG grant because it is the system through which elements of high-quality preschool programs will be measured through its robust assessment process. Key program structures that are evaluated by QF include: safe, enriching environments; positive interactions between children and adults that enhance instructional practices; highly qualified early childhood educators; small class sizes; and a comprehensive curriculum that incorporates ongoing, developmentally appropriate child assessment. To ensure implementation of these high-quality indicators, as well as the indicators of high-quality that go beyond this list, ADE and QF have worked collaboratively to provide support to early learning providers in the HNCs in key ways that include: on-site coaching, technical assistance, and targeted professional development.

In October 2015, we were delighted to join other select states in presenting at two "spark sessions" at

the annual meeting for Preschool Development Grant grantees. In one session, we told our story about the successful inclusion of a variety of partners to help with implementation of high-quality preschool programs for eligible children in Arizona. We highlighted our partnerships with the Early Childhood Development and Health Board (First Things First), the TQRIS system (Quality First), Head Start, private child care, faith-based, and in-home providers. After the presentation we were able to answer questions from participants on strategies we employed for developing those successful partnerships. This is an example of one of the great successes Arizona had in 2015.

For the second session, we partnered with the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) to demonstrate a mapping tool launched in Arizona by Read On Arizona, called “MapLIT.” Read On Arizona is a statewide, public/private partnership of agencies, philanthropic organizations, and community stakeholders committed to creating an effective continuum of services to improve language and literacy outcomes for Arizona's children from birth through age eight over the next ten years. Read On Arizona is committed to helping create an early literacy system that delivers the right program at the right time for every child. We were eager to be partnered with MAG for this “spark session” since the Deputy Associate Superintendent for Early Childhood at ADE, who is overseeing the implementation of PDG, was an active member of the Read On Arizona data integration taskforce that help to construct MapLIT and was able to demonstrate the potential uses of MapLIT and similar mapping tools, to support PDG efforts. Read On Arizona partners created MapLIT as a “one stop” resource to identify key data sets (census, school, health, family engagement) that impact early literacy outcomes in communities. Read On Arizona's MapLIT provides communities with graphic views of select data for all Arizona public/charter elementary school and preschool site locations. The benefit to PDG HNCs is the easy accessibility of data that could be useful in the community decision-making process for supporting the high-quality preschool programs in their HNCs. This is another example of the tremendous success Arizona had in year one of the PDG grant period.

One of the key takeaways the Arizona PDG team got from attending the PDG grantee annual meeting was the importance of telling our story as we do the work of implementation. As a result, when the team returned from the meeting, two things happened --the creation of a PDG portal on our website; and the development of a quarterly PDG newsletter. The PDG portal, which can be found at [www.azed.gov/earlychildhood/preschooldevelopmentgrant](http://www.azed.gov/earlychildhood/preschooldevelopmentgrant), provides an overview of the PDG and its participants, houses our original application, and gives access to PDG resources for participating sub-grantees as well as any other interested parties. Examples of the resources provided are links to audio recordings and written communiques of the state-level community of practice (detailed in this report), as well as any publications made available to sub-grantees.

The purpose of the quarterly PDG newsletter is to keep Arizona's ECE community informed of the tremendous work happening in communities all over the state of Arizona to implement the high-quality expectations of the Preschool Development Grant. We feel this communication is vital to maintaining our partnerships and to encouraging continued support of the PDG. It is also essential to our sustainability efforts as we demonstrate how the PDG is a benefit not just to those sub-grantees that

are able to participate, but also to the systems-building efforts of Arizona's ECE community. A key feature of the newsletter is a focus on the local HNCs and their stories, or the stories of their regionally-assigned Early Childhood Program Specialist. These anecdotal accounts are important as they are they concrete stories of the direct impact the PDG is having on Arizona's children, families, and communities.

### **Challenges and Lessons Learned**

A chief lesson learned during year one of this grant period was that while we were ambitious in our timeline and our eagerness to begin working to ensure high-quality preschool programming for eligible children, many of our partners were not as ready. These partners demonstrated a willingness to work with us and a matched desire to ensure Arizona's four-year olds receive high-quality preschool programming, but steps needed to be taken to ensure strong foundations were in place upon which to build.

One example of a setback was a delay in the start of work we contracted to do with the information technology (IT) unit of the Arizona Department of Education (ADE). Part of the funds designated for data linkages --linking preschool data with K-12 data collected in the state longitudinal system-- went unspent because of issues with ADE's IT Unit. One of the biggest projects for this year, moving archived, historical preschool data from Teaching Strategies GOLD to ADE, was halted while the ADE IT unit worked to secure personnel to work on the project. Subsequently, there were three changes in Project Managers assigned to this work, and three personnel changes to the role of system architect. Additionally, the proposal to spend this amount of money in year one was written on the premise that the ADE longitudinal system was ready for a data transfer; it was not and the people to do the work of readying the system were not in place. Despite this delay in the start of the work, we continued to press on in the work and stayed closely aligned to the IT unit so the transfer of data could happen as soon as possible. While our scope of work indicated it would be done by September 2015, the transfer of Teaching Strategies GOLD data was completed in November 2015.

A second example of a setback was in the readiness of early learning providers to provide high-quality preschool programs to eligible children. In our original application, we ambitiously wrote that we wanted to start providing services to eligible children right away although as a development grantee we would not be obligated to. We indicated that in year one of the grant period we would provide funding for 2,193 slots in our identified HNCs, at the cost of \$10,087,800. When programs in the HNCs submitted their proposals, the total number of slots they requested was 2,292. Since our award did not support this level of funding, we provided monies to just 2,193 slots. Additionally, when we received the grant funding and started to work with the HNCs, it became apparent that some early learning programs were not yet ready to start serving children in their HNCs in a capacity that meets the definition of high-quality programs. Specifically, some programs were not yet ready to provide full-time programming to students. In an effort to build good will in these communities and to help ready these programs to meet the definition of high-quality programs in years two, three, and four, we determined we would need to submit an amendment request to use some infrastructure-building funds to provide

for funding of half-time slots in these few HNCs for year one only. To maintain the integrity of the Preschool Development Grant, in our monitoring of these programs that used part day slots to prepare themselves to be ready for the use of full day slots, we ensured their understanding that this unique opportunity would not be available in years moving forward by having them write a statement of acknowledgment on the monitoring protocol.

We recognized that using funding this way in year one would cause a change in the percentage of overall funding spent for infrastructure and quality improvements if the rest of our application was left as originally written. Originally, we proposed using \$52,839,427 (66% of total funding) on full-time slots for children. Based on the approval of our amendment request, that number decreased to \$50,261,127 (62% of total funding). Thus, we made a second request to count the investment in *Professional Scholarships* as funding for providing access to high-quality programs for students. In year one, this was \$2 million. Additionally, attributed the \$1 million for professional development (250,000 per year for each year of the grant period) in the same manner. Through this adjustment, the overall funding spent on increasing the number and percentage of eligible children served in high-quality preschool programs by the end of the grant period would increase to 67%. After reviewing our data we determined the transfer of funds from direct services for children to infrastructure and quality improvements would not have an impact on the performance measures or our scope of work activities.

Another lesson learned was that even with the best planning, life happens. During year one, the ADE Early Childhood Unit experienced an unexpected period of change and transition. Mid-year there was a transition in leadership in ADE's Early Childhood Unit. The former Deputy Associate Superintendent (DAS), who led the writing of the original grant application and the start of the work, left state agency work to return to her roots as a Head Start person. At the same time, the former Director of Early Childhood Special Education, who assisted with the writing of the original grant application and the start of the work, had a baby and was on maternity leave. As a result, some of the activities that were supposed to be completed in year one did not happen. While work on PDG implementation continued to happen at the local and state level, larger activities like a statewide conference for PDG participants and others, as well as the work with institutions of higher education, did not occur. In September 2015, the former Director of Early Childhood Special Education returned to work as the new DAS and she resumed the work of PDG implementation. As a result of this learning experience, we have determined that we need to cross-train multiple people on our staff to be able to execute the activities outlined in our scope of work so that when the unexpected happens there is little impact to the work of the PDG grant.

## **Conclusion**



In conclusion, we accomplished a great deal of work in 2015. We believe the work we did to engage partners for the work prior to and during the writing of our application was well worth the effort. By consulting with our partners, garnering their support, and incorporating their ideas, we were able to lean into these state-level relationships with other agencies to help us start the work of direct services to eligible children right away. This effort to make systemic infrastructure improvements is essential to our work on sustainability beyond the period of this grant. At the same time, our Early Childhood Program Specialists worked diligently to build new relationships at the local level in each HNC. Since Arizona is a geographically large state, with a wide expanse between HNCs, we found that having a regionally-assigned ECPS already in place made it easier to support the HNCs on a very local level. We would highly recommend this approach to other states.



**U.S. Department of Education  
PDG Annual Performance Report  
Grant Status Form  
Explanation of Progress (524B Section A)**

Based on ED 524B OMB No. 1894-0003 Exp. 06/30/2017

Grantee State: AZ PR/Award #: S419A150009

**Section A: Performance Objectives Information and Related Performance Measures Data (narrative)**

**1. Project Objective**

**1(a) GPRA Performance Measure: The number and percentage of Eligible Children served in High-Quality Preschool Programs funded by the grant.** Describe the State's progress in meeting this Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) measure based on enrollment of Eligible Children in High-Quality Preschool Programs funded by the grant as of December 1, 2015.

In our original application, we proposed serving a target number of 2,193 children. However, the actual number of slots awarded and eligible children served in high-quality preschool programs funded by PDG was 1,942. When we wrote our original application we based our target numbers on data we collected for each HNC. While we had an idea of the number of eligible children in each HNC, we did not accurately anticipate the number of early learning providers whom would decline participation in the PDG program. Thus, while we made all 2,193 slots available, only 1,942 were filled. In response to this unexpected occurrence, our PDG team is working on stronger recruitment efforts for Year 2.

Please describe, as required in Program Requirement (k)(2) in the Notice Inviting Applicants (NIA), how the State established policies and procedures that ensure that the percentage of Eligible Children with disabilities served by the High-Quality Preschool Programs is not less than either the percentage of four-year-old children served statewide through part B, section 619 of IDEA (20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq.), or the current national average, whichever is greater.

*Note: The current national percentage of four year-old-children receiving services through part B, section 619 of IDEA is 6.4%. Source: 2012 IDEA Part B Child Count (www.ideadata.org). States should include detailed information on ALL structural elements.*

To set the expectation for sub-grantees to intentionally plan for including eligible children with disabilities in their programs, in the Preschool Development Guidance Manual we distributed to all sub-grantees, we outlined the following expectation: "One of the outcomes of the PDG is to increase the number of children with specials needs in the least restrictive environments. Therefore, sub-grantees will be required to serve no less than 2 children with identified special needs for every 20 children whom may not have identified with special needs. Exemptions (for example, 1 child instead of 2) may be applied for small family child care."

To support the full inclusion of eligible children with disabilities in the high-quality preschool program, we encouraged sub-grantees to do the following:

- Braid PDG funding with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) preschool funds

they may already be using for the student. The braided funding model could allow for an extended day for those eligible children with disabilities whose IEP teams decide a full day experience would be appropriate.

- Participate in professional development offered by the ADE-ECE unit on topics like “Coping with Challenging Behaviors” to increase the knowledge base and capacity of early learning providers to include students that may otherwise have been placed in a more restrictive environment.
- Expand their menu of comprehensive services from the three required areas: least restrictive environment, Child Find, and Family Engagement to include options like oral health, food security, or parenting kits (to name a few).

Describe the State's progress in increasing the number and percentage of Eligible Children served in High-Quality Preschool Programs funded by the grant.

The most influential factors that contributed to our success in creating new and improving existing state preschool program slots in 2015 are the investment we made to expand the state-level ECE infrastructure in Arizona and the decision to request the ability to authorize use of funds to assist sub-grantees ready themselves to be able to service eligible children. The improvements to the ECE infrastructure included work to improve data linkages, the cost to enroll sub-grantees in *Quality First* (or to expand their participation), and the conversion of 547 full-time slots to part-time slots. A formal amendment request was submitted and permission was granted for Arizona to maintain part day slots for year one to help build quality for year two. See attached "Amendment Request." Also, funds were used in targeted ways to help programs meet the definition of high-quality in the following ways: start-up funds, Professional Scholarships, and professional development.

For ECE infrastructure-building, in the area of data linkages, \$357,464.48 was used to link preschool data with K-12 data collected in the state longitudinal data system. One of the biggest projects for this year, moving archived, historical preschool data from Teaching Strategies GOLD to ADE's state longitudinal data system, AZDash, was accomplished in November 2015. The cost to enroll sub-grantees in *Quality First* was \$5.7mil. Enrollment in *Quality First* in year one was critical as *Quality First* was identified as the tool of measurement Arizona would use to evaluate the implementation of each structural element of the definition of high-quality preschool programs by each sub-grantee in the HNCs. Additionally, enrollment in *Quality First* ensured sub-grantees would receive the essential supports to successfully improve quality. These supports include access to quality coaches, inclusion specialists, mental health consultants, and childcare health consultants.

Additionally, when we received the grant funding and started to work with the HNCs, it became apparent that some early learning programs were not yet ready to start serving children in their HNCs in a capacity that meets the definition of high-quality programs. Specifically, some programs were not yet ready to provide full-time programming to students. In an effort to build good will in these communities and to help ready these programs to meet the definition of high-quality programs in years two, three, and four, we determined we would need to submit an amendment request to use some infrastructure-building funds to provide for funding of half-time slots in these few HNCs for year one only. A formal amendment request was submitted and permission was granted for Arizona to maintain part day slots for year one to help build quality for year two. A copy of the approved amendment request is attached. A total of 1,094 children were served.

Intentional efforts were made to use year one funds to help programs meet the definition of high-quality preschool programs. One targeted use of funds was the award of start-up funds to 18 sub-grantees for a combined total of \$638,265.38 These start-up funds were used by sub-grantees to purchase supplies to meet the program standards for classroom environments, to pay for state licensing fees since all programs were required to be licensed by Arizona's Department of Health

Services, or to enable the acquisition of qualified teachers for PDG classrooms.

A second targeted use of funds was the investment in College Professional Scholarships through FTF. In 2015, \$2mil was invested in the College Professional Scholarships program. The ADE ECE unit worked with FTF to recruit students on a pathway to an ECE or ECSE teaching certificate and to access the application for the scholarships through the Arizona Early Childhood Workforce and Professional Development Network. Specifically, the ADE ECE unit met with representatives of the administrative home for the scholarships, PBS, to outline an outreach plan for the PDG HNCs, delivery of information on the scholarships, and the priority order of award of scholarships to meet the PDG expectations. We counted this investment in scholarships as an activity to support the delivery of high-quality preschool programs to eligible children since research has shown us that quality often increases as the education level of the teacher increases. The expectation is that as teachers learn more about early childhood development or early childhood special education, the more likely they are to implement practices that meet the definition of high-quality.

A third targeted use of funds was in preparation for a series of professional development events we will be hosting in 2016. Since the ADE procurement process for securing venues and presenters, including national keynote speakers, is a lengthy process, we began the planning for these large professional development sessions in 2015. The necessary funds to pay for these events were obligated for a total amount of \$150,555.33. The three large professional development events are: the Kindergarten Transitions for All Summit in February 2016, the Support for the Young Learner with Special Needs Summit in April 2016, and the Early Learning Summer Institute in June 2016. All PDG sub-grantees will have the opportunity to participate in these professional development events at no additional cost to the sub-grantees since the costs are covered by PDG to help them meet the definition of high-quality preschool programs.

**1(b) GPRA Performance Measure: The number and percentage of children served overall in the State Preschool Program.** Please describe any increases or decreases in this GPRA measure based on fall enrollment in the State Preschool Program for the 2015-16 school year.

In fall 2015, 3,024 children were served overall in the state preschool program. This is 3.3% of all eligible children. The most influential factor that contributed to our success was partnering with our Early Childhood Development and Health Board, *First Things First*, to increase the number of participants in the state's tiered quality rating improvement system, *Quality First* (QF). Of the programs participating in PDG, 14 sub-grantees were already participating in QF and 41 sub-grantees were newly selected to participate in QF, of which 8 sub-grantees were on the waiting list for a number of years. In our original application we indicated our plan to invest a significant amount of money in *Quality First* since QF already partners with child care and preschool providers to improve the quality of early learning across Arizona. QF funds individualized improvements as identified through a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) that is generated based on assessment from environmental rating scales and a tool to measure the quality of classroom interactions. Quality improvements include, but are not

limited to, instructional skill, nurturing and responsive learning environments, knowledge and implementation of Arizona's continuum of early learning development standards for curriculum-building, and the use of assessments to improve learning outcomes. QF is the measurement system by which the sub-grantees in HNCs will be measured as they move towards higher levels of quality.

**1(c) GPRA Performance Measure: The number and percentage of children in the High-Need Communities served by the grant that are ready for kindergarten as determined by the State's Kindergarten Entry Assessment or, if the State does not yet have a Kindergarten Entry Assessment, other valid and reliable means of determining school readiness.**

*In the Year 2 APR, grantees will provide disaggregated data on the school readiness of the children served by the grant. This may include information collected about the children served by the grant at the end of their 2015-16 preschool year or in their 2016-17 kindergarten year. States may provide data from a sample of children (e.g., a sample being used for any evaluation).*

In the Year 1 APR, grantees must describe their progress towards identifying the measures, methods, and data on the school readiness of children served by the Preschool Development Grant. In the narrative below provide the following information:

- The name of the assessment tool(s) and the Essential Domains of School Readiness measured;
- When the assessment tool(s) is/are given (e.g., in preschool and/or kindergarten);
- Whether the assessment is mandated by the State, and for which children;
- How long the State has been using the assessment tool(s);
- Whether the assessment tool(s) is/are implemented throughout the High-Need Community and/or Statewide;
- Whether the State provides or will provide training for local staff administering the assessment. If so, describe the requirements including processes to ensure continued reliability in the administration of the measure;
- If school readiness data is reported to the State, describe when and how data are reported.

Also, please describe, if applicable:

- The State's definition of "school readiness;"
  - Disaggregated information about children's school readiness on individual domains or subsets of the measure;
  - School readiness data for children disaggregated by subgroup (e.g., students who are American Indian or Alaskan Native; Asian, not Pacific Islander; Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander; Black or African American; Hispanic/Latino; White, not Hispanic; two or more races; with disabilities; English learners; and from any other subgroups the state determines appropriate; and
- How the State will continue to make progress in meeting this GPRA measure.

Currently, Arizona does not yet have a Kindergarten Entry Assessment. However, based on the number of eligible children enrolled in 2015 on Teaching Strategies GOLD --the statewide required ongoing progress monitoring tool for preschool, 1,942 are the number of children in HNCs served by PDG that are ready for kindergarten. Data is collected on Teaching Strategies GOLD for 38 objectives in 10 learning areas: social-emotional, physical, cognitive, literacy, language, mathematics, social studies, science and technology, the arts, and English language acquisition. These data points align to Arizona's definition of "school readiness."

Through an extensive, collaborative process Arizona determined its common definition of school readiness is: "Arizona's young children will demonstrate school readiness through the Essential Domains of Language and Literacy development, Cognition and General Knowledge (including early mathematics and early scientific development), Approaches to Learning (curiosity, initiative,

persistence, creativity, problem-solving, and confidence), Physical Well-Being and Motor Development and Self-Regulation of attention and emotion. Intentional development of skills and knowledge in these domains establishes a critical foundation for children to engage in and benefit from opportunities to learn.”

A key accomplishment of the PDG in 2015 was use of funds to support the integration of preschool data gathered through Teaching Strategies GOLD (TSG) into the Arizona Department of Education's State Longitudinal Data System, *AZDash*. To integrate the TSG data with *AZDash* data, ADE's IT personnel worked with TSG personnel to do the work of modifying the data from one side to match the other so the two systems could talk to one another. Since the data is updated in real time, this work took a concerted effort to ensure the platforms sending and receiving the data matched as the migration of data was done. This required a contract with ADE's IT unit, and they in turned hired sub-contractors to do the work. In our original application, we said our participation in *AZDash* will enable reporting and analysis by the HNCs that can help identify achievement gaps, pinpoint initiatives that best promote positive outcomes, and provide data for longitudinal analysis. Additionally, it will serve as a way to ensure procedures, protocols, and practices are streamlined and revised for efficiency and comprehensiveness. The ultimate goal is to develop a secure, interoperable data network, identify necessary permissions to access, store, and disseminate data and related findings to stakeholders, and establish pathways for data sharing and exchange. In 2015, the first phase of this work was done with the transfer of archived Teaching Strategies GOLD data and the foundation for live data to be transmitted --an impact of approximately 85,000 students' (archived and active) data to *AZDash*!

Additionally, in 2015 a significant amount of work was done to continue Arizona's work to develop an appropriate tool. Arizona is part of the North Carolina K-3 Formative Assessment Consortium to help develop a valid and reliable Kindergarten Developmental Inventory (KDI) --Arizona's label for its kindergarten entrance assessment.

An enhanced part of Arizona's participation in the Consortium is Arizona's partnership with SRI International, BUILD, and Child Trends to do three main things: validate, and revise as needed, the assessment to establish a reliable, valid instructionally useful assessment tool; help develop and implement comprehensive professional development for the assessment; and work to develop a long-term, individualized K-3 assessment implementation plan.

The timeline Arizona identified for the work of establishing a KDI is as follows:

- March 2015-November 2015: K-3 Cognitive Labs. The purpose of the labs was to gain insight on the usefulness in classrooms of the constructs participants in the North Carolina Consortium agreed should be included in a tool. Teachers who participated in the cognitive labs tried out the materials in their classrooms with students and provided feedback to the research partners.
- August 2015-March 2016: Full K-3 Assessment Pilots. The purpose of the pilot is to gain insight into implementation, manageability, usability, of the assessment and the quality of the

technology and the professional development. K-3 teachers used the complete assessment across the school year and professional development activities were launched. On-going implementation support will be provided in 2016. Support will include conducting informational sessions for administrators and teachers, as well as developing an implementation plan.

- August 2016-June 2017: Full K-3 Assessment Field Test. The purpose of the field test will be to examine the validity and reliability of the assessment, the quality of the supporting materials, and the quality of the professional development and technology.
- Summer 2017: A Request for Proposals will be released to the public to select Arizona's tool.
- Fall 2017: Implementation of the use of the tool.

Based on this timeline, we do not anticipate having data from the KDI available in Year 2. This means we will continue to use data collected through Teaching Strategies GOLD to determine children's readiness for kindergarten. In Year 3, we should have baseline data available to use.

In an effort to prepare teachers and administrators for the implementation of the KDI, a professional development pilot entitled The Kindergarten Project was created in 2013. As a collaborative effort between the Arizona Department of Education and Alesi Group, supported by the Virginia G. Piper Charitable Foundation, The Kindergarten Project aimed to research and identify evidence-based kindergarten practices that support the whole child and increase the likelihood of academic and lifelong success.

In the spring of 2015, The Kindergarten Experience was launched with a Social and Emotional Development in Kindergarten conference. The Kindergarten Experience, an extension of The Kindergarten Project, is a series of dynamic professional development trainings, workshops and opportunities that offer a comprehensive lens for evidence-based practices that support the whole child in kindergarten. These identified practices are the foundation for the effective and successful implementation of the Kindergarten Developmental Inventory. Information about the Kindergarten Experience, like the training schedule as well as a virtual tour of the model kindergarten classroom the Alesi Group has designed, can be found at [www.thekindergartenexperience.com](http://www.thekindergartenexperience.com).

**For Preschool Development Grants - Development Grants States ONLY:**

**1(d) GPRA Performance Measure: The number of States that collect and analyze data on State Preschool Program quality, including the structural elements of quality specified in the definition of High-Quality Preschool Programs.**

In our original application, we indicated the use of Arizona's early learning document, the *Program Guidelines for High-quality Early Education: Birth through Kindergarten* (PGHQ) would be used to identify and outline the elements of high-quality, while Arizona's TQRIS system, *Quality First* (QF), would be used to measure where programs are in implementing the essential standards and indicators of high-quality preschool programs. The PGHQ delineate quality and provide a set of indicators that concretely describe what a program will look like when providing comprehensive experiences that nurture the whole child and encourages them to engage with responsive, nurturing adults who promote children's optimal development when they are not with their families. These standards meet the definition of a "High-Quality Preschool Program," indicated in the grant application guidelines. Key program structures that are evaluated by QF include: safe, enriching environments; positive interactions between children and adults that enhance instructional practices; highly qualified early childhood educators; small class sizes; and a comprehensive curriculum that incorporates ongoing, developmentally appropriate child assessment and is aligned with the PGHQ.

To ensure each early learning provider in our identified HNCs was properly equipped with knowledge of the PGHQ, we made available in-person professional development on the PGHQ, as well as hosted and recorded a webinar on the introduction to the PGHQ document. The recorded webinar was then made available to all PDG participants. Additionally, since *Quality First* is the TQRIS system in Arizona, there was no heavy lift needed to ensure early learning providers were given ample information about the expectations of the program.

Also, all sub-grantees were required to participate in ADE's Early Childhood Quality Improvement Practices (ECQUIP) process to ensure community collaboration on the implementation of high-quality preschool programming is taking place. This is also the way that the sub-grantees will link to the local education agency (LEA) in their HNCs. Through a program's participation in the ECQUIP process, the QF process will be augmented, resulting in the achievement of higher quality.

The ECQUIP was developed by the Early Childhood Education unit of ADE/ECE as a means to assure quality, accountability, and collaboration among schools receiving early childhood funding through ADE. There are two parts to the ECQUIP Process:

1. An annual self-assessment of the early childhood program, and
2. An ECQUIP validation visit made by ECE/ADE.

The ADE ECE unit is able to collect data on each of the structural elements of quality through the submission of a program's *Quality Enhancement Plan*, which is a requirement of the ECQUIP process. After completing their annual self-assessments, sub-grantees submit their enhancement plans on the

Arizona Local Education Agency Tracker (ALEAT). The ADE-ECPS is then able to review the enhancement plan online, and use as a guidance document for the on-site validation visit. During the on-site validation visit, the ADE-ECPS reviews the sub-grantees evidence or documentation for the indicators of quality and provides technical assistance as needed. The use of ALEAT to collect data is important as it allows for state level analysis of what is happening at the local level. This enables the ADE ECE unit to determine what may be areas of strength so as to scale up best practices, as well as to determine trending areas of challenges or barriers that may need to be addressed from the state level.

## Section A: Part B - Selection Criteria

In this section of the APR, States will report on their progress addressing the Preschool Development Grant's selection criteria. The State should read the questions carefully and report in the narrative fields directly below the questions. Please include any data, data notes or formulas to help the readers understand the State's narrative responses.

### 1. Ensuring Quality in Preschool Programs (Selection Criteria “C” of the application)

Describe the State's use of funds received over the grant period for State Preschool Program infrastructure and quality improvements, including the State's efforts to implement a system of monitoring and support at the State level toward activities such as those described in Section (C)(1)(a-k) of the NIA.

*Note: States will report amounts and percentage of funds for State Preschool Program infrastructure and High-Quality Preschool Programs in the Competitive Preference Priority 3 Chart.*

The ADE ECE compliance and validation monitoring system includes multiple ways to demonstrate compliance and validate quality improvements. The monitoring process is a team approach in collaboration with grant partners. A strengths-based, comprehensive ECQUIP process is used to evaluate the implementation of the PGHQ and to support sub-grantees through technical assistance that addresses specific issues and concerns. The PGHQ, as indicated in our original application, delineates each standard area that meets the twelve elements of a high quality preschool program as outlined in the notice of intent to apply. Sub-grantees are required to actively participate in the ECQUIP process, involves the completion of a rubric for self-assessment and a compliance visit conducted by ADE/ECE.

The ECQUIP was developed by the Early Childhood Education Section of ADE ECE as a means to assure quality, accountability, and collaboration among schools receiving early childhood funding through ADE. There are two parts to the ECQUIP Process:

1. An annual self-assessment of the early childhood program, and
2. An ECQUIP validation visit made by ECE/ADE

ECQUIP is intended to be used as a self-evaluation and planning process for on-going quality improvements at the local level. ECQUIP provides programs with a framework for reflection and consideration of quality practices. The guidelines for conducting an ECQUIP process include the creation of an implementation plan that documents continued improvement efforts. The design of each program's ECQUIP self-assessment is left to the local administration. There are four standards in ECQUIP:

- Standard 1: School and District Leadership
- Standard 2: Curriculum, Instruction, and Professional Development
- Standard 3: Classroom and School Assessments
- Standard 4: School Culture, Climate, and Communication

These four standards, and the indicators of each standard, align to the structural elements of quality outlined in the PDG's selection criteria. The following steps represent how a local ECQUIP process looks in implementation:

Step 1 ~ Assemble Team. The first step in the ECQUIP process is to convene an early childhood education team. Each early childhood program determines locally who is to participate on the ECQUIP team. At the minimum, a team should consider administrative members from the local LEA (Early Childhood Special Education, Title I preschool representative, principal, coordinators, etc.), instructional members (preschool, kindergarten, first through third grade, Reading First coach and librarians), and community partners (Head Start, local childcare provider, district community education, tribal partner, home visitors, Part C provider, community representative, parents, and QF participants). Together, the team works to design a self-assessment process that meets the needs of the program as a whole.

Step 2 ~ Choose a Standard for Improvement. The ECQUIP team completes a self-assessment using the ECQUIP Standards and Rubrics document, provided by the ADE/ECE. Members identify strengths and needs for each standard and identify activities for improvement for each standard. Quality indicators are included with each standard to assist teams in identifying program needs and areas for improvement. The ECQUIP team should also review any QF Improvement Plans and LEA Literacy Plans as part of this step.

Step 3 ~ Choose a Tool. Once the team has determined the standard for self-assessment, ADE/ECE strongly recommends the group augment the existing information related to the standard with data obtained from tools designed specifically for program and organizational assessment purposes. While not required, this can provide invaluable information for the team's quality improvement efforts.

Step 4 ~ Training. Each member of the ECQUIP team and other related personnel should have the opportunity to receive training and information about ECQUIP, the self-assessment process, tools chosen, and the QF System. With funding from the grant, regional training on the ECQUIP process will be provided in each HNC in year one of the grant.

Step 5 ~ Implementation of tool. Each team determines the breadth and depth of administration of the tools used in order to gather data useful to the team. All participating members should have a working knowledge of any local tools utilized, the ECQUIP rubric, the QF Improvement plans, as well as LEA Literacy Plans. Additionally, members should know the standards of quality as outlined in the PGHQ that meet, at minimum, the twelve elements of high quality preschool programming.

Step 6 ~ Review area identified for improvement Based on the results of any formal or informal assessments, QF assessments and Improvement Plan, and Title I improvement plans or local literacy plans, the team makes decisions related to the program's needs and determines future direction of the

improvement process.

Step 7 ~ Determine Strategies for Improvement and Create Enhancement Plan. Using the information gathered through the ECQUIP, the team completes a Quality Enhancement Plan and submits it to ADE/ECE through the Arizona LEA Tracker (ALEAT) system. The intent of the Quality Enhancement Plan is to assist ECQUIP teams with their long range planning for continuous quality improvement. The Quality Enhancement plans are monitored annually by the ADE ECPS through a desk review and when applicable, an on-site visit.

Step 8 ~ Reporting. Each LEA reports on the improvements generated through the HNC's ECQUIP process each year on their Quality Enhancement Plan via the ALEAT and reviewed annually by staff.

In 2015, the ADE ECE unit provided professional development to the HNCs on the ECQUIP process to ensure all PDG participants understood the process. PDG funds were used to pay for the travel of the ADE ECPS to conduct ECQUIP professional development, as well as to conduct on-site technical assistance. As a result, all PDG sub-grantees received needed training and were able to assemble their ECQUIP teams to start the ECQUIP process.

## **2. Expanding High-Quality Preschool Programs in Each High-Need Community (Selection Criteria D of application)**

Describe the progress the State has made during the reporting year to implement and sustain voluntary high quality preschool programs for eligible children in two or more High-Need Communities (Selection Criteria D(4) of the application) that include **ALL** structural elements listed below that are included in the definition of High-Quality Preschool Programs. States should include detailed information on ALL structural elements.

- High staff qualifications, including a teacher with a bachelor's degree in early childhood education or a bachelor's degree in any field with a State-approved alternative pathway, which may include coursework, clinical practice, and evidence of knowledge of content and pedagogy relating to early childhood, and teaching assistants with appropriate credentials;
- High-quality professional development for all staff;
- A child-to-instructional staff ratio of no more than 10 to 1;
- A class size of no more than 20 with, at a minimum, one teacher with high staff qualifications;
- A Full-Day program;

- Inclusion of children with disabilities to ensure access to and full participation in all opportunities;
  
- Developmentally appropriate, culturally and linguistically responsive instruction and evidence-based curricula, and learning environments that are aligned with the State Early Learning and Development Standards, for at least the year prior to kindergarten entry;
  
- Individualized accommodations and supports so that all children can access and participate fully in learning activities;
  
- Instructional staff salaries that are comparable to the salaries of local K-12 instructional staff;
  
- Program evaluation to ensure continuous improvement;
  
- On-site or accessible Comprehensive Services for children and community partnerships that promote families access to services that support their children's learning and development; and
  
- Evidence-based health and safety standards.

Please describe the progress the State has made in establishing High-Quality Preschool Programs that include ALL structural elements listed above that are evidence-based and nationally recognized as important for ensuring program quality.

All of the structural elements of high-quality listed were addressed in our informational and orientation meetings prior to the grant application process. Each prospective sub-grantee used a worksheet to determine how they could participate with or without changes. The elements are also listed in the "Preschool Development Grant Guidance Manual". Also each HNC has an Early Childhood Program Specialist (ECPS) that works with them to assist them in meeting the requirements of the grant. The ADE ECPS works directly with the coordinator or director of the sub-grantee program to ensure that all of the elements of quality are being met. The ADE ECPS also works with the HNC ECQUIP/COP Team to provide any technical assistance, professional development or resources that are needed to accomplish the tasks of the grant. Detailed below is the progress we have made in each area.

**High staff qualifications, including a teacher with a bachelor's degree in early childhood education or a bachelor's degree in any field with a State-approved alternative pathway, which may include coursework, clinical practice, and evidence of knowledge of content and pedagogy relating to early childhood, and teaching assistants with appropriate credentials;**

Administration of this grant funding falls under certain statutory requirements. Specifically, any entity receiving the Preschool Development Grant are bound by Arizona Administrative Code R7-2-612 which requires either a provisional or standard early childhood education certificate for those individuals teaching in early childhood education programs. Guidance was provided in our original PDG application. Those staff already with an ECE or ECSE certification or endorsement will receive weighted points on ADE's rubric for funding allocations. See attachment "High Staff Qualifications and Salaries." While not all staff may meet this qualification at the present time, the goal is to improve the quality of programming through the attainment of certification by the end of the grant period. In this instance, an *Education Attainment Plan* must be submitted for ADE approval. Once submitted, the *Education Attainment Plan* will be reviewed for approval. In order to obtain approval a *Curriculum Check Sheet* issued by an Institute of Higher Education must be submitted with the plan. This *Education Attainment Plan* must be updated and submitted by programs to ADE/ECE for approval annually. An example of the attainment plan was included in our original application. Sub-grantees must make and document every effort for recruitment of most highly qualified staff.

In our original application, we wrote we would invest in *College Scholarships for Early Childhood Professionals* with funding from the PDG, with the expected results of supporting continuing education and degree completion to elevate and professionalize the field, and to assist with recruiting and retaining a quality early childhood workforce, and supporting and increasing the quality of services provided to young children. This process took longer than we anticipated. The agreement we entered into with FTF was finalized late in the year, as was the identification of the administrative home for the scholarships program. However, intense work was done to ready the roll out of the scholarships

opportunity for the spring 2016 semester. The intent of this evidence-informed professional development strategy is to provide access to higher education for the early childhood workforce working directly with, or on behalf of, young children birth through age five who already have their AA and are ready to continue with their BA and ECE Certification.

**High-quality professional development for all staff;**

All programs participating in PDG must have their staff enroll in the "Arizona Early Childhood Workforce Registry" (Registry). The Registry is one component of the Arizona Early Childhood Career and Professional Development Network, which can be found at [www.azearlychildhood.org](http://www.azearlychildhood.org). Through the Registry, staff are able to locate and register for accepted professional development opportunities made available by other early childhood professionals, training organizations, pre-service and in-service professional development providers, the Department of Education, institutes of higher education, etc. The administrative home of the Registry ensures that the professional development opportunities and facilitators meet a certain level of quality. All of the regionally-assigned Early Childhood Program Specialists working at ADE are registered facilitators on the Registry and the professional development opportunities provided by ADE/ECE are listed on the Registry. Additionally, ADE/ECE conducted a survey of the PDG HNCs to get an idea of what professional development may be needed within each HNC. Subsequently, each HNC wrote a professional development growth plan based on the needs of their staff and the community.

**A child-to-instructional staff ratio of no more than 10 to 1; A class size of no more than 20 with, at a minimum, one teacher with high staff qualifications;**

Although Code R9-5-404 of Arizona's Child Care Licensure Regulations establishes a 1:15 teacher to student ratio for 4-year old children, the Program Guidelines for High Quality (PGHQ) establishes a higher level of quality as a 1:10 teacher-to-child ratio for 4-year old children. The PGHQ also recognizes that these ratios may be lowered based on the needs of children with disabilities in order to ensure appropriate, meaningful inclusionary practices are being implemented. In addition, the PGHQ establishes the group size maximum to be 20 children enrolled per group of 4-year olds. ADE will closely monitor ratios and group sizes of programs under this grant as it is truly reflective of what is needed to provide high-quality experiences for children (See PGHQ pages 10-11). Subgrantees must maintain ratio and class size during funding of PDG hours or risk losing funding. During this report period no violations of this child-to-instructional staff ratio was observed or reported.

**A Full-Day program;**

Sub-grantees operating under this funding are required to enroll children for a minimum number of hours per day, a minimum number of days per week and for a minimum number of program days per year. Program services must be provided for 9 to 10 months and outlined in the sub-grantees proposal. The school year should align with the K-3 calendar. In 2015, children were enrolled in either a full day or part day of service based on the following definitions and requirements:



- A full day of service for children is defined as a minimum of 4 days a week, 6 hours per day for a total of at least 24 hours per week.
- A part day of service for children is defined as less than 24 hours per week, with a minimum of 3 hours per day, 4 days a week or a total of at least 12 hours per week over at least 4 days. (This option **will not** be available in the 2016-2017 year. Part day services were available to some programs in 2015 to build infrastructure and to ready themselves to provide full day programming in year two. Next year, all programs understand that they must operate as full-day programs. This does not prevent programs such as Head Start from funding half the day with HS funds and the other half of the day with PDG funds to create a full day program.)

**Inclusion of children with disabilities to ensure access to and full participation in all opportunities;**

One of the outcomes of the PDG is to increase the number of children with identified special needs receiving their services in their least restrictive environment settings. Therefore, sub-grantees will be required to serve no less than 2 children with identified special needs for every 18 children whom may not have identified with special needs. Exemptions (for example, 1 child instead of 2) may be applied for small family child care. In our original application we indicated we would support sub-grantees with meeting this ambitious goal in two specific ways: the support of Quality First Inclusion Specialists and technical assistance.

As participants in our Tiered Quality Rating Improvement System, *Quality First*, sub-grantees have the support of Inclusion Specialists. These are child development and special education specialists who provide consultation to facilitate the inclusion of children with special needs by offering assessment and technical assistance. Supports include onsite consultation and training to promote early screening activities, identify children who need follow-up assessment and make classroom modifications to meet the needs of children with special needs.

Additionally, sub-grantees are receiving technical assistance from an ADE Early Childhood Program Specialist assigned to their area. This technical assistance includes assistance needed with making modifications to the environment to enable meaningful participation for all students, assistance with instructional strategies or modalities to enable meet the learning needs of students, and/or professional development on how to make accommodations or adaptations along a continuum to meet the needs of children with various types of disabilities and levels of severity.

Each HNC has identified, on a graphic organizer, the local LRE continuum placement options for their local IEP teams. Going through this process has allowed sub-grantees within an HNC to recognize the various options for children with special needs and to recognize themselves as one of those options. Also, sub-grantees have received technical assistance on the Child Find process from their local school districts with the HNCs.



**Developmentally appropriate, culturally and linguistically responsive instruction and evidence based curricula, and learning environments that are aligned with the State Early Learning and Development Standards, for at least the year prior to kindergarten entry;**

As part of the PDG, sub-grantees have received technical assistance on program practices that include developmentally appropriate practices, curriculum, and environment. At the initial PDG orientation meetings, representatives from each sub-grantee were given copies of the documents used by ADE-ECE including: Program Guidelines for High Quality Early Education: Birth through Kindergarten (PGHQ), Arizona's Infant and Toddler Developmental Guidelines (I/TDG), Arizona Early Learning Standards (AzELS), the Early Childhood Quality Improvement Practices (ECQUIP) and the Preschool Development Grant Guidance Manual (PDGGM). The PGHQ outlines what a quality program should look like, specifically Guideline 3.0 Program Practices: Curriculum, Environment, and Child Assessment, outlines what a program should be doing to provide high quality programming for children. The PGHQ addresses the twelve elements of high quality preschool program so receipt of the PGHQ indicates receipt of the twelve elements of high quality preschool program. As the grant progresses, directors and coordinators will be provided professional development regarding the PGHQ, with an emphasis on the twelve elements of high quality preschool programming. The Introduction to the Program Guidelines professional development module has been recorded as a webinar so that those that have not already attended an introduction to the document can easily access the module.

Additionally, each sub-grantee is enrolled in *Quality First*. As a program in *Quality First*, each sub-grantee has a coach that is also providing technical assistance in preparation for the *Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale-Revised* and *Classroom Assessment Scoring System* assessments. These tools are used as quality measurement instruments. In addition to a *Quality First* coach, each sub-grantee has access to other professional supports through the TQRIS system such as inclusion coaches, mental health consultants, and health consultants. The ADE ECPS are also available to offer technical assistance and professional development to the director and staff in each program.

**Individualized accommodations and supports so that all children can access and participate fully in learning activities;**

All sub-grantees were required to enroll their students on *Teaching Strategies GOLD*. This valid and reliable instrument is used to conduct on-going progress monitoring to continuously assess children's growth and development. The data collected from the tool guides teacher's lesson planning and grouping to meet the needs of each child in the classroom. In addition, this aligns with Arizona's use of the Multi-tiered System of Supports (MTSS) approach to individualizing instruction and support for each student. MTSS requires those adults working with children to analyze various forms of data to provide support and intervention for all children as needed. This data may be as reported by parents or students, anecdotal, observational, formative, or summative.

### **Instructional staff salaries that are comparable to the salaries of local K-12 instructional staff;**

During each PDG informational and orientation meetings, perspective participants were informed of this requirement of the grant. Local school districts were asked to share the salary scale for their kindergarten teachers. In addition, it was included in the PDG Guidance Manual: "As Arizona works to create a specialized workforce that has a Teaching Certificate through the ADE, it is expected that those professionals be paid a wage comparable to the Kindergarten teacher with the same certification requirements. Improved expertise and compensatory pay in preschool classrooms will result in improved retention rates of highly effective teachers and continuity of care for young children enrolled in early care and education programs. Additionally, in ECE classrooms where instructional support staff play such a critical role engaging students, it is necessary to improve their educational attainment level; thus requiring commensurate levels of pay. It is expected that the preschool instructional aids salary mirror that of a K-12 instructional support staff." When programs filled out their grant applications through our Grants Management System, they had to list salaries of staff. The ADE ECPS reviewed the grants to make sure that programs were following the compensation requirement. See attachment "High Staff Qualifications and Salaries."

To ensure the salaries of the PDG instructional staff matched that of the K-12 instructional staff, the ADE ECPS reviewed the average salaries of the kindergarten teachers in the HNCS (as provided on the district websites) and compared them to the salaries of the PDG instructional staff. A chief factor that is considered when reviewing the salaries is the level of education of the instructor. Once the PDG instructional staff member's education mirrors that of the district's kindergarten teacher, their salaries must be comparable.

### **Program evaluation to ensure continuous improvement;**

Each sub-grantee is required to enroll in *Quality First*. Through *Quality First*. Each sub-grantee that had not received a star rating prior to PDG participation will be assessed using ECERS-R and CLASS. At this time, all sub-grantees have enrolled in *Quality First* and are beginning to receive their visits from coaches. They will be notified of their expected dates for the ECERS-R and CLASS assessments. Please note that a program must receive their ECERS-R assessment and score (indicating they have passed and can move on to the next phase) before they continue on to CLASS assessment.

In addition, the ADE ECPS will conduct the ADE Early Childhood Quality Improvement Practices (ECQUIP) monitoring. During this reporting period, programs received professional development on the ECQUIP process and received a webinar on the PDG-specific indicators for monitoring. The ADE-ECPS have been working with their programs to prepare them for the monitoring. The monitoring tool for the PDG-specific indicators includes all of the requirements for the grant that the sub-grantees are responsible for. In this first year, all sub-grantees are being monitored for compliance. Any areas of

non-compliance will require an action plan and a follow up.

**On-site or accessible Comprehensive Services for children and community partnerships that promote families' access to services that support their children's learning and development;**

In Arizona, a student's placement in her/his least restrictive environment, child find, and family engagement are required comprehensive services. The ADE-ECPS work closely with each sub-grantee to provide technical assistance in completing the requested tasks. All sub-grantees have received professional development on least restrictive environments and child find. The local school district in each HNC has assisted programs with these services. All sub-grantees received a "Child Find Analysis" template to be used to evaluate their child find system. Sub-grantees are required to upload this document to the ADE Arizona Local Education Agency Tracker (ALEAT) system. By uploading to the ALEAT system, the ADE-ECPS will be able to review the analysis and provide additional technical assistance and professional development as needed. In addition, an inclusion specialist may assist in providing services and resources to sub-grantees

The state level HNC community of practice has developed a tool to assess family engagement (the *Family Engagement Self-Assessment*). It incorporates the elements of family engagement outlined by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), ADE's ECQUIP rubric, and the program Guidelines for High Quality. Once a program has assessed their own family engagement practices, they have a form to create a "Family Engagement Action Plan". Both the self-assessment and action plan will be uploaded to the ALEAT system. Once again, this is a way for the ADE-ECPS to access the action plans and self-assessments in order to provide appropriate technical assistance and professional development based on their data.

For other comprehensive services, each HNC is required to look at the needs of their local families and communities to determine what they need to provide. They are highly encouraged to be a part of the local First Things First Regional Partnerships Councils to obtain additional resources.

**Evidence-based health and safety standards.**

Sub-grantees were required to enroll and participate in the Arizona Department of Health Services *Empower* Program. By enrolling in *Empower*, the sub-grantees pledged to adopt the ten standards that encourage active play, practice sun safety, support healthy eating, promote good oral health habits, prevent exposure to second-and third-hand smoke, and provide staff three hours of professional development on *Empower* topics. To demonstrate participation, sub-grantees wrote policies for each of the ten standards as a statement of their intent or commitment to each standard. The benefits of being an *Empower* program include; reduced licensing fees, state-issued Empower facility designation, an Empower Pack of ready-to-use resources, and an *Empower Guidebook*. The *Empower Guidebook* provides information on each of the standards and sample policies for centers to use or to adapt. A link to the guidebook was included in our original application. The ADE-ECPS

provided technical assistance as needed in writing the policies for the *Empower* standards.

In addition, each program is required to be licensed and be in good standing with licensing. The licensing standards are based on safety. Sub-grantees are required to use the Program Guidelines for High Quality, specifically Program Guidelines 2.4 (Daily schedules and routines effectively ensure children's health and safety throughout each program day.), 6.1 (The program will assess and meet children's general health status and developmental needs.), 6.2 (The parent education portion of the program includes a component on children's health, nutrition, and well-being by supporting families with information.), 6.3 (A variety of nutritious, appealing and high quality meals and snacks are provided each day).

In 2015, a significant amount of work happened at the local level in each high-need community (HNC). In the scope of work, the expectations of the work for the HNCs was delineated and HNCs were held accountable for the completion of targeted objectives, projects, and activities. Each HNC developed their own local community of practice (COP) and the ADE ECE Unit convened a state level COP. For the state level COP, each HNC identified at least one member to represent the HNC at state level COP meetings. The intent and purpose of the state level COP was to serve as an opportunity for HNC members to regularly network and work collaboratively with one another on issues that may be common to the group. Through this group, consistent work on implementing high-quality preschool programs for eligible children was able to be accomplished in each of the HNCs. Each component below was addressed:

### **Early Learning and Development Standards**

In 2015, all sub-grantees in each HNC were able to request professional development on any of the documents in Arizona's continuum of early learning documents: *Infant Toddler Developmental Guidelines*, *the Arizona Early Learning Standards*, and *the Program Guidelines for High-Quality Education: Birth through Kindergarten*. Additionally, sub-grantees could elect to receive professional development on any of the other topics offered in the catalogue of professional development offered by the ADE ECE unit.

### **Program Standards that are consistent with a high-quality preschool program**

In 2015, all sub-grantees in each HNC received professional development on the *Program Guidelines for High-Quality: Birth through Kindergarten*, either face-to-face or through a webinar. The webinar was recorded so it could be easily accessed in the future by sub-grantees.

### **Programs for children with disabilities and English learners, including workforce development for support of those programs**

An important aspect of ensuring smooth transitions for children and families receiving services under Part C to services under Part B is the opportunity for professionals in both agencies (AzEIP and ADE).

as well as members of other agencies in Arizona's ECE system, to meet annually at an early childhood special education (ECSE) conference. While an ECSE summit was not held in 2015, the planning for a springtime ECSE summit began. With funding from the grant, this joint summit is being organized to bring in national and local presenters to provide high-quality professional development that meets the needs of the ECE/ECSE professional community. Topics to be addressed at this summit include transitions to and from the various ECE programs, family support and engagement in all levels of decision-making on behalf of young children, strategies for early literacy with infants and toddlers, infant mental health, school-readiness, as well as many others. All PDG sub-grantees in each HNC will have the opportunity to attend this summit at no additional cost to the sub-grantees.

### **Methods to determine the availability of high-quality preschool programs, including private and faith-based providers and Head Start programs**

In 2015, all sub-grantees in each HNC were required to participate in their local education agency's *Early Childhood Quality Improvement Practices* (ECQUIP) process. The first step of the ECQUIP process is for the LEA to assemble a team and that team should include representatives of their community partners including private child care providers, faith-based providers, and Head Start programs. Through this collaborative process sub-grantees were able to meet with their local partners to determine the availability of high-quality preschool programs, or to determine what steps would need to be taken to make those programs available to more eligible children.

### **Preschool teacher education and inclusion of early childhood education and development in teacher certification and/or requirements for licensure**

Administration of this grant funding falls under certain statutory requirements. Specifically, any entity receiving the Preschool Development Grant are bound by Arizona Administrative Code R7-2-612 which requires either a provisional or standard early childhood education certificate for those individuals teaching in early childhood education programs. Guidance was provided in our original PDG application. While not all staff in every sub-grantee in each HNC may meet the qualification at the present time, the goal is to improve the quality of programming through the attainment of certification by the end of the grant period. In this instance, an Education Attainment Plan must be submitted for ADE approval. Once submitted, the Education Attainment Plan will be reviewed for approval. In order to obtain approval a Curriculum Check Sheet issued by an Institute of Higher Education must be submitted with the plan. This Education Attainment Plan must be updated and submitted by programs to ADE/ECE for approval annually. An example of the attainment plan was included in our original application. Sub-grantees must make and document every effort for recruitment of most highly qualified staff. At each orientation meeting in 2015, this teacher certification requirement was emphasized and technical assistance on the Education Attainment Plan was provided as necessary. For 2015 data, see attachment "High Staff Qualifications and Salaries."

### **Improvements to teacher and administrator early education training programs and professional development**



In 2015, all sub-grantees in each HNC received professional development on the Child Find process, local referral procedures, and federal mandates. Additionally, all teachers and administrators in the HNCs had the opportunity to attend any or all of the following large professional development sessions. Each program in each HNC were allowed to send 2 attendees at no additional cost to their programs. Since the large professional development opportunities were made available to the larger ECE community, non-PDG participants were charged a fee to attend.

- The ADE ECE School Readiness Summit, June 11-13, 2015.

This 3 day professional development opportunity targeted professionals working within settings that support the early part of the educational continuum. Key features of the Summit included the recently completed Arizona's School Readiness Framework document and the opportunity to engage with other educational professionals around Arizona to establish a common definition of school readiness across the state. Also, there was a heavy focus on children's Approaches to Learning in regards to the Pre-K through kindergarten experience

- The ADE ECE Kindergarten Transition Summit, January 21, 2015.

This one day summit provided an opportunity for Early Childhood Quality Improvement Practices (ECQUIP) Teams to:

- Learn the current research regarding kindergarten transitions.
  - Hear from a local community that has been successful with implementing a kindergarten transition process.
  - Design effective strategies and implementation plan with their ECQUIP teams.
- The ADE ECE Infant Toddler Summit, February 10-11, 2015.

In August 2013, ADE and its collaborating partners sponsored a one-day Infant Toddler Summit to officially release the Arizona Infant Toddler Developmental Guidelines (ITDG).

In February 2015, we hosted a two-day summit that focused on in-depth modules of the ITDG, effective instructional strategies for working with infants & toddlers, including those with special needs, and the importance of building strong foundations that lead to school-readiness.

### **Use of a statewide longitudinal data system to link preschool and elementary and secondary school data**

All sub-grantees in each HNC are required to use Teaching Strategies GOLD (TSG) as their ongoing progress monitoring tool. This aligns with the statewide use of TSG for preschool programs serving children with special needs. Three times a year the data is transmitted to the ADE ECE unit as a compliance indicator. The data collected in TSG is monitored for quality assessment measures using a rubric by an ADE ECPS. In 2015, this data was linked to the ADE state longitudinal data system for K-12, AZDash, and in years 2 through 4, the data will be in both TSG and AZDash to inform local

decision-making, and to support the use of data to make state-level decisions.

### **A comprehensive early learning assessment system**

All sub-grantees in each HNC will be required to develop and implement a comprehensive early learning assessment system. The ADE ECE unit has created a guidance document and training modules for the appropriate use of assessment in early childhood, as well as recommendations for the use of data collected through effective assessment practices.

### **Building preschool programs' capacity to engage parents in decisions about their children's education and development, help families build protective factors, and help parents support their children's learning at home**

In late 2015, the ADE ECE unit created a family engagement self-assessment tool to be used by all sub-grantees in each HNC to determine their current capacity to engage parents in decisions about their children's education and development, help build protective factors, and help parents support their children's learning at home. The family engagement self-assessment tool includes indicators from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), as well as indicators from the ADE's ECQUIP rubric. The family engagement self-assessment will be distributed in early 2016 and will be used to guide the work of improving family engagement practices in years 2 and beyond.

### **Building state- and community-level support for high-quality preschool programs through systemic linkages to other early learning programs and resources to support families, such as child health, mental health, family support, nutrition, child welfare, and adult education and training sectors**

In 2015, all sub-grantees in each HNC received technical assistance from an ADE ECPS to enroll in the Empower Program and to write their statements of intent or commitment to each of the ten standards within the Empower Program. In 2012, the ADE and other key state agencies signed a memorandum of understanding, recognizing that the Empower program would serve as our statewide established goals for child wellness. Nearly 90% of licensed child care providers in Arizona participate in Empower, a department of health services program that partially subsidizes child care licensing fees for programs that actively encourage young children to make healthy choices about nutrition and physical activity. Arizona was recently recognized as one of only three states utilizing high impact obesity prevention regulations in child care. Early learning providers that participate in the Empower program pledge to adopt ten standards that encourage active play, practice sun safety, support healthy eating, promote good oral health habits, prevent exposure to second-and third-hand smoke, and provide staff with three hours of professional development on Empower topics. Sub-grantees were required to write a policy for each of the ten standards as a statement of intent or commitment to implement these evidence-based health and safety standards. The benefits of being an Empower program include reduced licensing fees, a state-issued Empower facility designation, an Empower

pack of ready-to-use resources, and an Empower Guidebook which provides information on each of the standards and sample policies for centers to use or to adapt.

### **Other activities that support the delivery of high-quality preschool programs to eligible children**

In 2015, professional development was provided to all sub-grantees on how to access ADE's Grants Management System, GME, since this system is used for all fiscal reporting. This reporting includes expenditure reports, reimbursement requests, and completion reports. Additionally, the ADE ECE fiscal Program Specialist recorded a webinar on the topic of budgeting for quality. The webinar was accessible to all sub-grantees.



### **Table 6 - Selection Criteria (D)(4) from NIA**

Describe the number and percent of Eligible Children served and the cost per slot. Please explain if *Year 1 Target* from the application and *Year 1 Actual* in **Table 6** differ, and any approved changes in targets for Years 2-4.

In Table 6, we are reporting that there were 57,329 eligible children in Arizona in 2015. Of those eligible children, 1,624 were served in new preschool slots for a percentage of 2.8%, 311 were served in improved preschool slots funded with PDG and Head Start for a percentage of 0.5%, and 7 were served in improved preschool slots funded with PDG and other funds no Head Start for a percentage of 0.01%. The combined total of children served in new and improved slots is 1,942 for a percentage of 3.4%. The allocation per slot we awarded was \$4,600. This allocation is to cover the expenses of providing a high-quality preschool program: teacher salaries, instructional assistant salaries, supplies, etc.

This actual number of eligible children served is different from the target number we set in our original application.

In the original application, we indicated that in year one of the grant period we would provide funding for 2,193 slots in the identified HNCs. However, once we received the grant funding and started to work with the HNCs, it became apparent that some early learning programs were not yet ready to start serving children in their HNCs in a capacity that meets the definition of high-quality programs. Specifically, some programs were not yet ready to provide full-time programming to students. In an effort to build good will in these communities and to help ready these programs to meet the definition of high-quality programs in years two, three, and four, we submitted an amendment request to use of some infrastructure-building funds to provide for funding of half-time slots in these few HNCs for year one only.

We recognized that using funding this way in year one would cause a change in the percentage of overall funding spent for infrastructure and quality improvements if the rest of our application was left as originally written. Originally, we proposed using \$52,839,427 (66% of total funding) on full-time slots for children. Based on the approval of our amendment request, that number decreased to \$50,261,127 (62% of total funding). Thus, we made a second request to count the investment in Professional Scholarships as funding for providing access to high-quality programs for students. In year one, this was \$2 million. Additionally, we attributed the \$1 million for professional development (250,000 per

year for each year of the grant period) in the same manner. Through this approved adjustment, we expect the overall funding spent on increasing the number and percentage of eligible children served in high-quality preschool programs by the end of the grant period to increase up to 67%. After reviewing our data we determined the transfer of funds from direct services for children to infrastructure and quality improvements would not have an impact on the performance measures or our scope of work activities.

### 3. Collaborating with Each Subgrantee and Ensuring Strong Partnerships (Selection Criteria E of the application)

Describe the extent to which the State has collaborated with each Subgrantee to ensure that each Subgrantee is effectively implementing High-Quality Preschool Programs (Selection Criteria E (1-9) of the application) and how the State ensures strong partnerships between each Subgrantee and LEAs or other Early Learning Providers, as appropriate.

As a requirement for an HNC to be eligible to participate in the PDG program, within each HNC, the local school district within the zip code areas had to agree to participate. The rationale we used is since these preschool children within the HNC will eventually be in the local school district, an agreement from the school district to participate and collaboratively work with the sub-grantees was necessary to ensure continuity of the quality children and families could expect when they leave preschool and enter K-12.

Once the HNCs were identified and the sub-grantees within each zip code area were awarded, an ADE ECPS was assigned to the HNC. As outlined in the original grant application and the "Preschool Development Grant Guidance Manual", the ECPS would assist the sub-grantees within the HNC to support quality improvement efforts and facilitate collaborative relationships. The ECPS would work in conjunction with the *Quality First* coaches once they were assigned to each sub-grantee.

The mechanism used to ensure collaborative partnerships within each HNC is the Early Childhood Quality Improvement Practices (ECQUIP). As described in the original grant application, ECQUIP is intended to be used as a self-evaluation and planning process for on-going quality improvements. The guidelines for conducting ECQUIP include building a team and creating an implementation plan. ADE/ECE has used this system for approximately ten years with updates and revisions as needed each year. This tool is also used for monitoring programs. Since the PDG has additional requirements, a grant-specific monitoring tool was designed to address those requirements.

The ADE ECPS were trained on the use of the monitoring tool with sub-grantees in November 2015 and the HNCs will receive a training in January 2015 on use of the tool. The ADE ECPS have been reviewing the tool with their programs and setting up monitoring dates. A desk monitoring occurs during the grant process. First, the ADE ECPS reads through and checks the budget and program details of the grant. If there are questions, the ADE ECPS either calls the program or returns the grant application to the program for explanation or changes. Once the ADE ECPS approves the grant, it moves to an ADE ECE director for approval. The director reads the history and reviews the same items as the ADE ECPS. The director either approves the grant or disapproves with an explanation for changes or explanation that may still be needed. If disapproved, the grant goes back to the sub-grantee for changes and they resubmit to start the process over again. One of the items that is addressed in this part of the grant is the budget and, specifically, the requirement to "minimize local administrative costs".

The *Preschool Development Grant Guidance Manual* outlines the process for providing proper justification for administrative costs. There are three options listed: federally approved indirect cost rate, submit an indirect cost proposal, and direct charge for up to 5%. This is noted in the grant application and reviewed.

One of the first items for this year's ECQUIP teams that received the PDG was to be sure that all participating sub-grantees within the HNC were included on the teams. As we began the work, we discovered that there was, in some cases, more work to be completed by the sub-grantees than could be handled in the typical ECQUIP meetings. We also realized that there was work at the state level to be completed that we really wanted the HNCs to be involved in. Therefore, we created an HNC Community of Practice (COP).

Each local HNC decided if they needed to have a sub-committee to address the requirements of the Scope of Work (SOW), or if they could do it within the regular ECQUIP meetings. For those that used a sub-committee, they developed local COPs. We then asked each HNC team to elect one person to attend (in person or via webinar) a state-level COP meeting. The state-level COP was introduced to PDG participants through a professional development presentation entitled, "Leading by Convening." At the end of the presentation, the group was asked to fill out a worksheet defining whom they may need at the table in order to successfully start a local COP. They completed the worksheet and began the state level work. The work of this group is based on the SOW Project 4. The State Level COP has created the following tools to be used by each HNC: Family Engagement Self-Assessment, Family Engagement Plan, LRE Continuum, and Child Find Analysis. After each meeting, a "communique" is sent to all PDG participants to keep them aware of what is happening at the state level.

Each ECQUIP/COP team meets regularly (they determine the number of meetings). As a team, they make decisions for their community. Some of their work at the beginning of the year included: identifying criteria for most in need, recruitment strategies and sharing wait lists. In most instances, many of the programs already had a plan in use (Head Start or school districts) and the sub-grantees brought in the various plans and strategies to discuss as a team. The ECPS was there to facilitate these discussions.

The ECPS explained that at the beginning this was a difficult transition. The ECPSs have typically been the leads in these types of discussions. However, we really wanted the HNCs to take on leadership roles and make decisions for their community since the sustainability of their efforts will depend greatly on the systemic changes they lead and their abilities to articulate their decision-making to their communities. First, we had a technical assistance session for our ECPS on facilitating rather than leading. Then, the ECPS assisted the HNCs in recognizing their own abilities as a team to complete the work that needed to be accomplished.

When a program was awarded, they agreed to participate in Arizona's TQRIS system, Quality First (QF). Through QF, each sub-grantee either continued to work with a coach (if they were in QF prior to the grant) or if they were new to QF they were assigned a coach. All sub-grantees had been pulled

and assigned a QF coach by December 15, 2015. The QF coach for each sub-grantee has a task of working with the director to prepare programs for the assessments of quality used by the state: ECERS-R, CLASS, and the Quality First Points Scale (a local tool to measure administrative indicators).

#### **4. Alignment Within a Birth Through Third Grade Continuum (Section F of the application)**

Describe progress the State has made for alignment within a birth through third grade continuum in activities for birth through age five programs ((F)(1)(a-b) in the NIA) and kindergarten through third grade ((F)(2)(a-d) in the NIA).

Each of the HNC's in Arizona are set up around a school district. The HNC may have the following programs receiving PDG funds: school district programs, Head Start, childcare, faith based programs, home providers, and charters. This model gives parents a true choice of where they want to see their children placed. When we were contacting programs to participate, we looked at lists of programs in each HNC area and contacted any program with a 3 Star rating or above. If there was an area with no programs that had a least 3 Stars, we looked at programs with 2 Stars. The preschool children that are receiving services will eventually be a part of the district so it was imperative that the district be a willing participant. The work to be accomplished by the HNC was to be completed through an already established system, the ECQUIP (Early Childhood Quality Improvement Practices) and/or the local Community of Practice (COP).

##### **Transitions for Programs Serving Children from Birth through Age Five**

The first step in this process was to re-tool the ECQUIP from being just a district activity to make it a community of practice. The ECPS in each HNC helped to bring about this transformation by facilitating the meetings. All of the sub-grantees in an HNC are required to participate in the ECQUIP/COP. This allows for uniform processes and discussions that would include any program that works with children birth to grade 3 within a community.

The next step was for each ECQUIP/COP to establish a set of processes for enrolling children most in need, maintaining a community wait list, and recruitment. This has not been easy. Many of the programs saw themselves as vying for children before other programs got them. We have been able to show them ways to work with one another by looking at qualifications for each program. For example the threshold for income in Head Start and PDG are different. So children that make too much for Head Start could be in a PDG program or where there is a large number of three year olds needing space, they could go to a Head Start program or a child care program with an age 3 classroom and leave the 4 year olds to attend a PDG program. Through this process HNC's began to realize that they really were working as a community for children rather than as individual agencies. It is still very much a work in progress.

In the middle of this work, we realized as an agency, that we would be creating new tools as the need arose. Thus, we asked each local ECQUIP/COP to elect one person to attend a statewide COP. This would give the local programs a voice in decisions made at the state level. They also have great ideas

and resources that we do not necessarily have or know about. This year the state level COP has met 4-5 times. The members can participate in person or via a webinar. They have used the Scope of Work Project 4 as the guide to their work. This year they have specifically established tools for child find and family engagement. The plan in the future is to have longer working days and meet twice a year. Communiques from the state level COP goes out to all programs in PDG. This way everyone knows what is happening even if they did not personally attend.)

Since many of our programs are in private childcare facilities, faith-based programs, and home providers, we are not limited to just preschoolers that are being affected. As a result of the inclusion of a variety of providers, we have increased the options families have when selecting the best place for their child. Now when a family in the participating PDG HNCs look for preschool for their four year olds they can choose to put their child in a setting that meets the definition of a high-quality preschool program and fits their family's needs.

We have worked with programs to make sure that they are not supplanting. We have made it very clear that participation in PDG is to create new or improved slots. It was made explicit that they could not use PDG funds to save money or to re-allocate money somewhere else. This was reviewed through the grant process and through technical assistance provided by the ADE ECPS.

### **Transitions for Programs Serving Children from Kindergarten to Grade 3**

Each district in the state is required to have an ECQUIP (Early Childhood Quality Improvement Practices) Team. The team is made up of instructional staff from preschool and grades K -3, parents, administrators and community partners. ECQUIP was designed to assure quality, accountability, and collaboration among schools receiving early childhood funding through ADE. Through this process each district completes a self-assessment yearly and receive an ECQUIP validation visit from ADE/ ECE. The activities completed by an ECQUIP team brings the various grade levels together to look at how they are working to improve outcomes for children grades preschool through 3rd grade.

In Arizona, the assessment tool used for preschool is Teaching Strategies GOLD. Teachers use the data collected to plan for individual children and lesson planning. Programs can use it to plan for teacher professional development and materials needed in the classroom. All teachers and administrators are trained on the use of the tool. When ADE/ECE monitors we look at the quality of the information included in children's portfolios based on a "Child Observation and Portfolio Rubric". Technical assistance is offered where needed. In addition to child assessment to ensure children are well-prepared for kindergarten, all sub-grantees participate in Quality First. Through the assessments conducted in QF, the quality of the classroom and teacher-child interactions are assessed. Professional development and technical assistance is offered to sub-grantees through our ECPS and the coaches at Quality First.

There are currently multiple bills being introduced to the state legislators regarding full-day kindergarten.

One of the plans that each HNC needs to complete is the Kindergarten Transition Plan. Arizona uses a Kindergarten Transition Plan template designed by the ADE ECE unit and is based on the work conducted by Pianta and Kraft-Sayre. Several years ago, ADE/ECE hosted our first Kindergarten Transition Summit with Jason Downer, a colleague of Pianta's, as the keynote speaker. All of our kindergarten transition work is based on the Pianta and Kraft-Sayre book, "Successful Kindergarten Transition".

Each ECPS has worked with their HNCs to provide technical assistance around the Kindergarten Transition Plan. During an ECQUIP/COP meeting, they have reviewed transition plans already in place with some of the sub-grantees such as school districts and/or Head Starts. After reviewing those plans, each HNC is developing a plan for the entire HNC to use. Each sub-grantee will be able to add or tweak the HNC plan to meet their local needs.

The Arizona plan addresses the following connections: child to school, family to school, school to school and community to school. Each HNC develops activities around the connections that a child needs to be successful in Kindergarten.

In 2015, ADE-ECE hosted a one day Kindergarten Transition Summit. In February 2016, there will be a follow up summit. The participants will be divided into two tracks: returning participants in a track to move on to the next level of transition planning and new participants will receive the module from last year's session to introduce them to Kindergarten Transitions. In 2015, there were approximately 200 attendees, including the sub-grantees in the PDG programs. We expect the same in 2016.

In addition to this work, ADE/ECE is working with Arizona's institutions of higher education (IHEs), both universities and community colleges, to increase the quality of teacher preparation for both the Early Childhood Education teaching certificate and the Early Childhood Special Education certificate. In May 2015, the Deputy Associate Superintendent for Early Childhood, along with a representative from ADE's teacher preparation program, hosted a meeting with approximately 40 representatives from the various IHEs. The meeting focused on generating ideas for improving the birth through age 5 practicum experiences and student teaching placement options for students working on a birth through age 8 certificate. There is a focus on being connected to the teacher preparation program as it is essential to preparing new teachers on the definition of high-quality preschool programs that also has implications for K-3 programming.

## Section A: Part C - Competitive Preference Priorities

### **Competitive Preference Priority 1: Contributing Matching Funds (if included in the State's approved application).**

Describe the progress the State has made on its credible plan for obtaining and using non-Federal matching funds to support the implementation of its ambitious and achievable plan during the grant period. For progress *not* made in this area, please describe the State's strategies to ensure that measurable progress will be made by the end of the grant period. Please describe any changes made to the data reported in **Table 7(a)**; explain if your *Year 1 Target* differs from the *Year 1 Actual*.

Arizona's plan to improve the quality of the early learning experiences for its preschool aged children and the necessity of building strong preschool through grade 3 continuums is much larger than this grant. Throughout Arizona at both a state level and local level investments are being made on behalf of young children. It is recognized in Arizona that a strong foundation in early childhood, from birth through grade 3, is the key for the future of Arizona. Indeed, strong foundations are necessary if we expect generational change.

In a state where 25% of high school students fail to graduate from high school in 4 years, 66% of children do not attend any preschool programs and 23% of our 3<sup>rd</sup> graders do not pass the AIMS reading assessment it is essential that Arizona target its available resources to close the learning gap and provide strong foundations for vulnerable children in our high needs communities. Arizona does not have a universal model of preschool funding, but through the FTF tobacco tax local FTF regional partnerships councils (RPCs) may choose to fund preschool scholarships based on the prioritized needs of their communities. Overall, FTF RPCs make significant investments in early childhood education and health throughout the state. According to the FTF annual report for 2015, eighty million dollars was invested in quality childcare and preschool, 34 million dollars was devoted to strengthening families, 19.5 million dollars supported strategies targeted toward preventative health. In addition, 6.8 million dollars was allocated to workforce development and training efforts and 1.3 million dollars was earmarked for systems coordination. This is a significant investment to the children in Arizona.

FTF funds are dependent on tobacco tax revenue which is fluid and an acknowledged declining revenue source. Already, some FTF dollars are used to match other federal grants within the state. For the purposes of the grant, FTF funding will be providing the match in the form of professional development infrastructure.

### **Competitive Preference Priority 2: Supporting the Continuum of Early Learning and Development (if included in the State's approved application).**

Describe progress made in creating a more seamless progression of supports and interventions from birth through third grade, such as high-quality infant and toddler care, home visitation, full-day kindergarten, and before and after care services for, at a minimum, a defined cohort of eligible children and their families within each high need community served by each Subgrantee. For progress *not* made in these areas, please describe the State's strategies to ensure that measurable progress will be made by the end of the grant period.

Arizona recognizes that continuous and consistent high-quality learning experiences are critical to

children's success. This continuity is possible only when there is a continuum of comprehensive high-quality supports and services offered to children and families. High-quality preschool programs are only one part of such a comprehensive ECE system. To help create smooth transitions for children and families from wherever it is those children may spend their first five years of life to these high-quality preschool programs, Arizona's ambitious but achievable plan as outlined in its original grant application addresses the creation of a more seamless progression of supports and interventions from birth through third grade by supporting three key program areas: home visitation, Early Head Start/Head Start, and early intervention.

Area 1: Home Visitation. In September 2011, AZDHS was awarded \$36 million in grant funding from the federal MIECHV program. This initiative has allowed for Arizona to develop a systematic approach for planning, funding, and collaborating efforts to provide accessible, high-quality home visiting services to children and families in vulnerable communities. Home visitation programs provide participating families of infants and toddlers with information and education on parenting, child development and health topics while assisting with connections to other resources or programs as needed. Home visitors deliver one-on-one coaching and interaction with parents or caregivers in the home that tailor to the needs of individual families.

Implementation of the MIECHV grant is guided by an Interagency Leadership Team (IALT). Its members include ADE, the Arizona Department of Child Safety (DCS), AZDHS, which includes including the Bureau of Women and Children's Health (BWCH) and the Division of Behavioral Health Services (DBHS), Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS), which is the State's Medicaid agency, Arizona Early Intervention Program (AzEIP), and FTF, as well as consultants and evaluators for the MIECHV Program. The group meets monthly to dialogue about the efforts to build the home visiting system in a comprehensive way. The Deputy Associate Superintendent for Early Childhood Education is on the IALT, ensuring the interests of PDG are addressed, as well as the work of the HNCs being shared so home visitors in these areas are abreast of the work happening in their communities.

With funding from the grant, ADE will be able to support building the capacity of home visitors through collaborative professional development that focuses on the Infant Toddler Developmental Guidelines. In 2015, the ADE ECE unit provided professional development on the *Infant Toddler Developmental Guidelines* (ITDG) to 327 professionals who work in the following settings: districts, Head Starts, private childcare, and in programs exempt from licensing. Combined, those professionals work with 4,472 children. These professional development sessions included home visitors, to them with an in-depth examination of the ITDG, which addresses each developmental domain for infants and toddlers, as well as guidance on how to use the ITDG in their work with helping to strengthen and stabilize families.

Area 2: Early Head Start/Head Start. ADE is the administrative home of the Arizona Head Start Collaboration Office. In our ambitious but achievable plan, we indicated the HSCO will continue to

build a streamlined, organized system of support for HNCs through facilitation of sustained, collaborative relationships among Early Head Start and Head Start programs, LEAs, private childcare providers, MIECHV home visitors, Part C providers, and other key stakeholders. With funding from the grant, ADE was able to support building the capacity of infant and toddler teachers and instructional aides through targeted professional development that focused on the ITDG. In 2015, 44 teachers from Head Start were trained on the use of at least one domain of the ITDG. This professional development provided infant and toddler teachers and instructional aides with in-depth examination of the ITDG, which addresses each developmental domain for infants and toddlers, as well as guidance on how to implement the ITDG in their classrooms.

Additionally, in 2015, the ADE ECE unit, in collaboration with the Head Start Collaboration Office, provided a joint summit focused on supporting professionals who work with or on behalf of infants and toddlers in Arizona. This two-day summit focused on in-depth modules of the ITDG, effective instructional strategies for working with infants & toddlers, including those with special needs, and the importance of building strong foundations that lead to school-readiness. The summit was open to Early Head Start and Head Start teachers and administrators, private child care providers, MIECHV home visitors, IDEA Part C providers, and other members of the HNCs who serve a role in Arizona's ECE system.

Area 3: Early Intervention. Arizona recognizes the importance of providing high-quality transition experiences to children and their families receiving early intervention services under Part C the IDEA as they move to preschool services under Part B, section 619 of the IDEA. The components of a high-quality transition plan include extensive family engagement, collaboration between early intervention providers and preschool programs, and intentional planning. Currently, there is an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) between the DES AzeIP and the ADE that helps to clarify the transition requirements for children transitioning from Part C to Part B. Arizona's ambitious but achievable plan includes providing funding for improving the Part C and Part B partnership in two key ways: targeted, collaborative professional development and an annual conference to be held each year of the grant funding period.

An important aspect of ensuring smooth transitions for children and families receiving services under Part C to services under Part B is the opportunity for professionals in both agencies (AzeIP and ADE), as well as members of other agencies in Arizona's ECE system, to meet annually at an early childhood special education (ECSE) conference. While an ECSE summit was not held in 2015, the planning for a springtime ECSE summit began. With funding from the grant, this joint summit is being organized to bring in national and local presenters to provide high-quality professional development that meets the needs of the ECE/ECSE professional community. Topics to be addressed at this summit include transitions to and from the various ECE programs, family support and engagement in all levels of decision-making on behalf of young children, strategies for early literacy with infants and toddlers, infant mental health, school-readiness, as well as many others.

**Competitive Preference Priority 3: Creating New High Quality State Preschool Slots (if included in the State's approved application).**

Describe progress made in using at least 50% of the State's federal grant award to create new State Preschool Program slots that will increase the overall number of new slots in State Preschool Programs that meet the definition of High-Quality Preschool Programs. For progress *not* made in this area, please describe the State's strategies to ensure that measurable progress will be made by the end of the grant period.

In 2015, Arizona used 60.4% of the funding it received to create new and improved state preschool program slots to increase the overall number of new slots in state preschool programs that meet the definition of high-quality preschool programs. Our ambitious target was 71.2% and while it was not met, we are proud of what we accomplished to provide direct high-quality programming to Arizona's four year olds. Since Arizona does not have a state preschool program, we do not have data for "improved slots." However, we had 311 slots that were braided with Head Start funding to create high quality full day opportunities for students.

Additionally, inherent in the early childhood system is the principle that families have the right to choose how they access a high-quality through a mixed delivery system. This principle allows for family choice of public school programs as well as private, for profit, non-profit or faith based options. Utilizing a mixed delivery system, where all programs meet at minimum the twelve elements of high quality preschool program, we were able to offer an array of choices for families in 2015. PDG participating sub-grantees were family providers, Head Start classrooms, district preschool classrooms, private child care providers, and even faith-based providers.

Arizona's plan is to continue increasing the number of new state preschool program slots that meet the definition of high-quality preschool programs. Our goal is to increase the total slots in year 2 to 2,608. By year three, with the addition of another 434 slots to newly improved high-quality programs, the total number of new slots will increase to 3,043. By year four, the addition of 434 slots will bring the total up to 3,478 new slots by the end of the 4 year grant. ADE will continually work with the HNCs to identify new early learning providers as the current HNCs near capacity and have diminished waiting lists.

## Section B: Budget Information

### Budget and Sustainability (Section G in the application)

1. Please provide a brief explanation of any discrepancies between the State's approved budget and its total expenditures for the reporting year. Explain carry-over funds that have not been expended or obligated from January 1, 2015 through December 31, 2015.

We have unobligated funds due to the period of the grant being January 1 through December 31; the Arizona Department of Education operates on a different fiscal year (July 1 through June 30). Thus, while ADE received grant funds in January and was able to begin using funds for administrative purposes, the funds to provide services to children (a substantially greater percentage of the funds) did not disburse until July 1.

The categories of the budget that were under unspent or unobligated are:

- **Travel:** \$18,166 - The Early Childhood Program Specialists did not start traveling to the High Need Communities to the work outlined in their Scope of Work until after July 1, 2015.
- **Equipment:** \$7,777.64 - 2 laptops and 2 projectors were purchased for the Early Childhood Program Specialists; we are waiting to get a quote for a third projector and wireless remote controls for presentations. The remaining funds will be invested in Professional Development for our HNCs.
- **Supplies:** \$2,158.14 - Office supplies and materials for the kindergarten transition conference were purchased, but the consumable materials for the Professional Development that requires it hasn't yet begun. Program Specialists are spending much of their time getting HNCs ready for the systems building part of their work through building relationships and providing technical assistance grant applications, the Early Childhood Quality Improvement Practices (ECQUIP) process, participation in the TQRIS (Quality First), monitoring, assessment, providing comprehensive services, etc.
- Contractual:
  - Professional Development: \$99,444.67 is unobligated. We plan to expend all of these funds by the end of summer 2016. We have three conferences scheduled for the coming calendar year 2016; contracts with vendors are pending. The conferences are: Supporting the Young Learner with Special Education Needs --April 5th-6th, 2016; and Summer Conference on the Whole Child --June 8-10, 2016. For all PDG subgrantees, the costs of these conferences will be paid for with these Professional Development funds.
  - Institutions of Higher Ed: \$95,000. The work with the Arizona Institutions of Higher Ed was put on hold when there was a transition in leadership in ADE's Early Childhood Unit. The initial plan was to meet with the institutions and provide intense PD to them through the summer and to provide incentives for changes to coursework in the fall. However, the two people doing this work were unable to execute this part of the plan. The former Deputy Associate Superintendent (DAS), Amy, led the work and was supported by the Director of Early Childhood Special Education, Nicol. Amy left state agency work and Nicol went on maternity leave at the same time and the work did not continue. In September, upon return from maternity leave, Nicol became the new DAS and plans to resume work with the IHEs in January. A meeting to determine next steps is planned for January 15, 2016.
  - Data Linkages; \$160,935.52: The funds designated for data linkages work this year went unspent because of issues with ADE's information technology (IT) Unit. One of the biggest projects for this year, moving historical data from Teaching Strategies GOLD, was halted while the ADE IT unit worked to secure an FTE to work on the project.

Subsequently, there were three changes in Project Managers, and three changes to the system architect. Additionally, the proposal to spend this amount of money in year one was written on the premise that the ADE longitudinal system was ready for a data transfer; it was not and the people to do the work of readying the system were not in place.

- Indirect Costs: \$21,630.59 - The Arizona Department of Education operates on a different fiscal year (July 1 through June 30). Indirect costs will be fully charged at the end of the Fiscal Year.
- Funds to be Distributed to the Subgrantee:
  - Startup Funds: \$113,361.62 - While we requested and were awarded funds for startup programs, what we estimated the costs to be were not expended. While 18 Programs were helped to start a PDG classroom, there were some areas in which we anticipated putting PDG classrooms that simply were not able to. We hope to help at least one additional provider become a startup program in one of the HNCs next year.
  - PDG Slots: \$ 1,154,600 - While our grant administrator and leadership in the HNCs worked diligently to recruit students and teachers, 251 student slots were unfilled. We had 7 providers withdraw the program due to the requirements of the grant, and several providers weren't able to fill their slots due to recruitment of staff.
- Funds set aside for Technical Assistance: \$18,799.01 -The funds for technical assistance have not been used because much of the work the Early Childhood Program Specialists have been doing with the HNCs are related to setting up the local communities of practice and do not yet require funds.

2. Please describe any substantive changes that you anticipate to the State's Preschool Development Grant budget in the upcoming fiscal year (January 1, 2016 through December 31, 2016).

Arizona would like to increase the dollar amount we allotted for each slot. Currently, we awarded \$4,600 per slot per year to programs. We have learned over the course of the first year that this allocation just isn't enough, particularly for our in-home family providers. We would like to propose increasing the allocation to \$5,000 per slot per year. If we invest \$1.2 M of the carryover in increasing the PPE we would be able to reach our target of 2,608 slots and in years 3 and 4 we would increase by 200 new slots and not 400 slots how we had planned in our initial application. The overall impact to our goals is a decrease of 435 slots over the 4 years, which equates to 8% decrease in slots and a decrease of 9% to number of children served.

3. Describe the State's progress on its plan for sustainability at the end of the grant period to ensure that the number and percentage of Eligible Children with access to High-Quality Preschool Programs in the State will be maintained or expanded, including to additional High-Need Communities.

To ensure the number and percentage of eligible children with access to high-quality preschool programs in the state will be maintained or expanded beyond the end of the PDG grant period, efforts around sustainability have been embedded into many of the activities outlined in the scope of work.

Sustainability is also a driving force for the building and maintenance of on-going relationships with other early childhood education professionals and organizations in our state. Part of the work of the Deputy Associate Superintendent for Early Childhood Education, who oversees the PDG at ADE, is to provide guidance and information to statewide partners working to make ECE a priority in Arizona. Thus, we are ensuring sustainability, statewide coordination with partner on ECE systems-building work, and coordination with institutes of higher education.

Arizona received significant support for the grant application at the time it was written. This demonstration of support will help build the early childhood infrastructure in specific, targeted ways as well as allow for increased access to high-quality preschool programs in the HNCs. Our goal continues to be to take advantage of the grant opportunity now, and with advocacy work through relationships, partnerships, and collaborations, build support for future years when Arizona is ready to consider additional funding for preschool expansion.

Due to the generosity of Arizona's philanthropic community, Arizona has been identified as a BUILD state. Build Arizona is comprised of both public and private sector leaders who have come together to make early childhood a priority. Representatives from government agencies, business, K-12 schools, child care, and higher education have come together to strategize specific goals for moving forward an early childhood education agenda. Goals are focused on communicating the importance of the early childhood investment, improved access to quality early learning experiences across a wide spectrum, improved professional development, increased preventative health initiatives with a focus on school readiness, and creating sustainable systems that support Arizona's children in early grade success. This group is convened to look at the ECE system as a whole with focused attention on issues of access and equity. The Deputy Associate Superintendent for Early Childhood Education is a member of the Build Arizona committee, ensuring a voice representing the interests of PDG is at the table.

The Early Childhood Development and Health Board, which is Arizona's State Advisory Committee, continues to be the leading advocate for quality early learning systems. The state board is made up of 9 members chosen to represent the state's diversity. The AZDES, AZDHS and the Superintendent of Public Instruction, or their chosen designees, serve as non-voting ex officio members. The appointees include men and women, Democrats, Republicans, and an Independent from six counties. Each member brings experience in early education, K-12 education, health care, juvenile justice, higher education, philanthropy, business and Tribal government. All members have been confirmed by the Senate.

The 28 FTF Regional Councils meet the diverse needs of Arizona communities. Not only do they make decisions about which early childhood strategies will be funded but they work within their communities to ensure that what children in their community get what they need to arrive at school healthy and ready to succeed. FTF Regional Councils actively advocate for both statewide local attention to ECE issues.

Children's Action Alliance has been a voice for children for over 25 years. Children's Action Alliance (CAA) is an independent voice for Arizona children at the state capitol and in the community. CAA works to improve children's health, education, and security through information and action. Through research, publications, media campaigns, and advocacy, CAA seeks to influence policies and decisions affecting the lives of Arizona children and their families on issues related to health, child abuse and neglect, early care and education, budget and taxes, juvenile justice, children and immigration, and working families. CAA works toward a future in which all children have health insurance, no child is raised in poverty and hunger, every child enters school ready to learn and succeed, no child endures the ravages of abuse and neglect, every child has a place to call home, and struggling teens have the support they need to become responsible adults. CAA is a strong partner in helping to increase funding and improving both access and quality of preschool slots.

Expect More Arizona is a partnership organization that believes all Arizona children deserve a world-class education, which gives them the opportunity to succeed in life. To ensure a strong economic future for Arizona and a higher quality of life for everyone, we have to make education a top priority in our state. The partners understand that a world-class education system is one in which every Arizona child, regardless of background, income, or zip code, is able to:

- Access high-quality early learning that prepares him/her for Kindergarten,
- Read proficiently by the 3rd grade,
- Graduate from high school ready for college or career, and
- Attain a college degree and/or certificate or industry credential.

These organizations are key partners in Arizona being able to sustain the gains made through the work of PDG. Arizona has many champions for a sustainable early childhood system that ensures that children who may benefit from a preschool experience can find not only affordable and accessible slots, but high-quality in the program their family has chosen for them.

4. Please provide a brief explanation of any discrepancies, if any, between the Subrecipients' approved budgets and their total expenditures for the reporting year. Explain carry-over funds that have not been expended or obligated from January 1, 2015 through December 31, 2015.

\$1,267,961.62 was unobligated due to the fact that 251 slots for eligible children went unfilled and \$113,361.62 of the startup funds were not used. Sub-grantees worked very diligently to fill the slots for eligible children but one challenge all of the HNCs faced was the recruitment of highly-qualified staff to put in classrooms. In Arizona, there is an overall teacher shortage of greater than 700, with the greatest deficit of teachers being in early childhood. This was also a problem for PDG sub-grantees. Without the right personnel, it was difficult for sub-grantees to ensure enough instructional staff for the number of students they anticipated serving. Additionally, after the award of slots, 7 providers opted out of the program. Details of these discrepancies are detailed in Question 1 of this section.