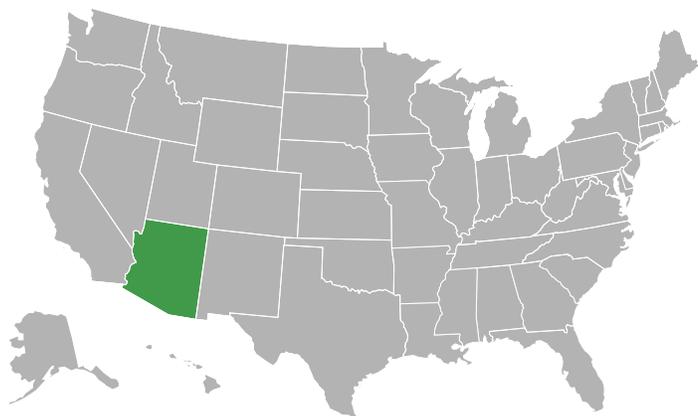


# PRESCHOOL DEVELOPMENT GRANTS

## FY2017 ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT

### Arizona



Preschool Development Grants

AUGUST 2018



# U.S. Department of Education

## PDG Grant Performance Report Cover Sheet

Based on ED 524B OMB No. 1894-0003 Exp. 08/31/2020

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: 01/01/2017                      To: 12/31/2017

### 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	\$4,572,319.00
b. Current Budget Period	\$20,000,000.00	\$7,052,304.00
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: 07/01/2017                      To: 06/30/2018

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. 08/31/2020

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 2017, Arizona made accelerated progress in its efforts to expand access to high-quality preschool and to enhance early learning systems through participation in the Preschool Development Grant opportunity. We applied for and received \$20 million per year 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 2017, this continued partnership enabled us the opportunity to provide 2,872 slots for four year-olds in programs that met all elements of the structural definition of high-quality preschool programming in 67 high-need communities (HNCs) in Arizona. The 67 HNCs are spread across seven counties and were selected based on an original set of four criteria, and additional elements added for year 3 selection. 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.

## Key Highlights and Accomplishments

· The continued success of the Early Childhood Task Force on Inclusion

In January 2016, ADE started work on the development of its Early Childhood Task Force on Inclusion. The purpose of the task force is to increase inclusive opportunities for children with low incidence disabilities, and to support teachers and administrators as they work to provide high-quality inclusionary environments and practices. The make-up of the task force includes representatives from Arizona's early childhood system: public school teachers, public school and district administrators, private child care teachers and administrators, Head Start teachers and administrators, United Way, early childhood and special education instructors from Arizona's institutes of higher education. The task force is utilizing the Leading by Convening model for the structure of this community of practice, and following implementation science as the core mechanism for moving the group from theory to practice. The data points that underpin the task force on inclusion are: rates on the number of children served in their least restrictive environment; the availability and quality of least restrictive

environment continuum of placement options; and the results of an inclusion survey conducted by ADE through Arizona's Early Childhood Workforce Registry.

The inclusion survey questioned respondents in the following five areas: Attitudes and Beliefs; Interpretation of the Individuals with Disabilities Act; Staff expertise and training; Comprehensive services; and Building partnerships. The survey was sent out to public education agency staff; Head Start staff; and other early childhood partner organizations. The respondents were able to self-identify their roles, and if we overlooked a role, they could add it. We received 371 responses from all but two of the fifteen counties in Arizona. Currently, the task force includes representation from Maricopa, Pima, Apache (tribe), and Navajo (tribe) counties. As a result of meetings in 2016, the task force accomplished three things: created a mission and vision; established a common definition of inclusion; and reviewed the survey data to serve as information to inform the direction of the task force.

In 2017, the group followed a process of problem identification, goal development, and strategy development. Goals such helping understand how to blend funding streams, increase administrator knowledge about the importance of an early childhood education, and increasing teacher knowledge of the strategies to include children in general education settings rose to the top. As public awareness about the taskforce has increased, representatives have been able to share the work of the group with state and local partners in a variety of ways. The group is now delineating and refining the strategies to accomplish the important goals related to its theory of change.

- The use of College Scholarships to support degree attainment

In our original application, we said with funding from the Preschool Development Grant we would ambitiously invest in College Scholarships for Early Childhood Professionals, a First Things First funding strategy. 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. The expected results of supporting continuing education and degree completion is elevating and professionalizing the field, recruiting and retaining a quality early childhood workforce, and supporting and increasing the quality of services provided to young children. In 2017, Preschool Development Grant funds were used to fund 340 students pursuing Bachelor's degrees in early childhood or early childhood special education! The total number of credit hours paid for in 2016 was 3,926.

### **Challenges and Lessons Learned**

In year three, an area that continued to be a challenge was in the recruitment of teachers who met the minimum requirement of possessing at least a Bachelor's degree. In Arizona, there is a significant teacher shortage. According to one source, at the start of the 2016-17 school year, there were 2,041 teacher vacancies (<http://www.abc15.com/news/state/group-arizona-teacher-shortage-reaching-crisis-levels>). In addition to vacant positions, cited in this same source, a survey conducted by the

Arizona School Personnel Administrators Administration, found that “47% of teaching positions were vacant or were filled with applications that did not meet the standard teacher requirements. In addition, 465 teachers left their job within the first four weeks of the school year.” For ADE, this crisis was felt even at the preschool level. As a result, in 2017, some four year olds were served in classrooms with a teacher who did not meet the minimum requirement of a Bachelor's degree. Since we know the program met all the other elements of the definition of high-quality preschool programming, we allowed early learning providers to use funds to operate their programs and accept children. We did not count these children in our total number of new slots, but we felt this would be a wise investment to, in many cases, help these early learning providers establish preschool classrooms. These dis-counted slots, however, did impact our overall number.

One of the lessons we learned in year two of implementation, as a result of our experience with less than qualified teachers, is that perhaps we should try a different approach to high-needs community eligibility for participation in the PDG opportunity. Thus, in year three, we made additions to the selection criteria. In years one and two of the PDG, 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. This yielded ADE a handful of zip codes in which early learning providers may be eligible for participation. Thus, much of the recruitment effort for teachers was placed upon a small number of potential early learning providers. Factors like geographic location and ability to pay a comparable salary to that of the local kindergarten teacher made it difficult for these providers. This prompted the ADE ECE Unit to brainstorm some potential solutions. As a result, in year three, ADE used an enhanced list of criteria and a scoring rubric to determine high-needs communities. To establish the list and rubric, ADE assembled a PDG advisory group, made up of current PDG participants and the PDG grant administrator. The group made a recommendation that the list include the following:

- Previous participation in PDG, and in good standing;
- On tribal land;
- Can recruit a teacher with a Bachelor's degree;
- Can recruit a teacher with an ECE or ECSE teaching certificate;
- Located in a rural or underserved area;
- Licensed and in good standing;
- Already enrolled in Quality First, the state's tiered quality improvement rating system

ADE agreed with the recommendation, and added these elements to the original set of criteria used. The goal was to ensure year three of PDG program all children are served in slots that meet the full definition of high-quality preschool programming, and our data demonstrates this was an effective strategy.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, 2017 was a year of growth and stretch for the ADE-ECE Unit as it administered the PDG.

The intentional work to increase the capacity of sub-grantees to operate more independent of the ADE-ECE Unit was successful as we look ahead to decreased role of the state agency in the implementation of the PDG. The lessons learned in years one and two informed the planning for year three, and helped us refine our processes. Our internal and external partnerships continue to be critical to our delivery of services to eligible early learning providers and to their provision of high-quality programming to children and their families. In year three, we continued our efforts to contribute to and fortify Arizona's early childhood infrastructure since it remains critical to our work on sustainability beyond the period of this grant. At the same time, the ADE-ECE 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 has given ADE's ECE Unit a real presence at the local level, and helped programs truly feel supported.



**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. 08/31/2020

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, 2017.

In 2017, we proposed serving 3,044 children in high-quality preschool programs funded by the grant. The actual number of eligible children served was 2,872. This means we served 94.3% of our target goal. 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, and we underestimated the readiness level of some to meet the definition of high-quality preschool programs. Thus, while we made all 3,044 slots available, only 2,872 were filled. As a strategy to recruit more eligible early learning providers in HNCs, the ADE-ECE Unit tried a different approach to determine high-needs community eligibility for participation in the PDG opportunity in year three.

In years one and two of the PDG, 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. This yielded ADE a handful of zip codes in which early learning providers may be eligible for participation. Thus, much of the recruitment effort for teachers was placed upon a small number of potential early learning providers. Factors like geographic location and ability to pay a comparable salary to that of the local kindergarten teacher made it difficult for these providers. This prompted the ADE ECE Unit to brainstorm some potential solutions.

As a result, in year three, ADE used an enhanced list of criteria and a scoring rubric to determine HNCs. To establish the list and rubric, ADE assembled a PDG advisory group, made up of current PDG participants and the PDG grant administrator. The group made a recommendation that the list include the following elements: Previous participation in PDG, and in good standing; were located on tribal land; ability to recruit a teacher with a Bachelor's

degree; could recruit a teacher with an ECE or ECSE teaching certificate; is located in a rural or underserved area; is licensed and in good standing; and is already enrolled in Quality First, the state's tiered quality improvement rating system. ADE agreed with the recommendation, and added these elements to the original set of criteria used. The goal was to increase the number of eligible four-year olds served, and while we did not meet our target number, we did increase the number of children served by more than 500.

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](http://www.ideadata.org)). States should include detailed information on ALL structural elements.*

In 2017, of the 2,872 children in the PDG program, 260 were children with disabilities. This represents 9.1% of all children served. We were able to serve these many children with disabilities because we made a concerted effort to fully support sub-grantees to provide high-quality inclusionary settings for children. One of the key outcomes of the PDG in Arizona is to increase the number of children with identified special needs receiving their services in their least restrictive environment settings. Therefore, sub-grantees were required to serve no less than 2 children with identified special needs for every 18 children whom may not have identified with special needs. Since we use a mixed-delivery system, there are exceptions for sites that may be small in size (i.e. a 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 and Mental Health Consultants. 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 on-site 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. In 2017, there were 67 HNCs with 127 sites in those HNCs. Of the 127 sites, 93 received Inclusion Coach Support services (73%) and 118 received Mental Health Consultation (93%). The sites that did not receive Inclusion Coach Support services and/or Mental Health Consultation were located in counties where recruitment of coaching staff has been difficult given their rural nature. In Year 4, recruitment efforts will continue.

Additionally, sub-grantees are receiving technical assistance from an ADE-ECE 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.

Additionally, in Year 3, the ADE-ECE Unit continued its work with the ECE Taskforce on Inclusion. To begin the work of understanding the state of early childhood inclusion in Arizona, ADE-ECE and the HSCO conducted an online, statewide survey that asked questions related to attitudes, beliefs, policies, and practices related to inclusion. The data was collected and analyzed, then prepared for review by the taskforce members at the first taskforce meeting. A call for a collaborative effort to find solutions to providing more inclusive settings for young children was answered by many: early learning providers in PDG HNCs, school district leaders from around the state, Head Start staff, as well as state agency representation and contractors who provide administrative support and direct services all committed to addressing the issue.

To organize the taskforce, ADE-ECE provided training on the Leading by Convening model to establish the structure of the taskforce. As a result of using this model, the taskforce was able to create mutual goals, strategies, and theory of action after a series of meetings. A recorder takes notes during each of these meetings and every member receives a copy of the communiques. Over the course of the past year the group followed a process of problem identification, goal development, and strategy development. Goals such helping understand how to blend funding streams, increase administrator knowledge about the importance of an early childhood education, and increasing teacher knowledge of the strategies to include children in general education settings rose to the top. The group is now delineating and refining the strategies to accomplish these important goals.

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 state preschool program slots in 2017 are the investment we made to expand the state-level ECE infrastructure in Arizona and further recruitment efforts. The improvements to the ECE infrastructure included the continued work to improve data linkages, the cost to enroll additional sub-grantees (or to expand their participation), and support the continued enrollment of programs in Quality First. 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, we continued using funds to support the continued integration of preschool data with K-12 data collected in the state longitudinal data system, AZDash. In 2017, this work included maintenance of the ECE landing page, the addition of data on early childhood special education exit rates, and data on English language learner re-classification rates. Additionally, ADE continued its partnership with Quality First to enroll new sub-grantees and to maintain year one participants in the tiered quality improvement rating system. 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 child care health consultants. In 2017, 77 of the 127 PDG sites in Quality First were funded solely with PDG funds and 50 were funded with braided funding from PDG and First Things First.

A second targeted use of funds was the investment in College Professional Scholarships through First Things First. In our original application, we said with funding from the Preschool Development Grant we would ambitiously invest in College Scholarships for Early Childhood Professionals, a First Things First funding strategy. 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. The expected results of supporting continuing education and degree completion is elevating and professionalizing the field, recruiting and retaining a quality early childhood workforce, and supporting and increasing the quality of services provided to young children. In 2017, PDG funds were used to fund 340 students pursuing Bachelor's degrees or higher in early childhood or early childhood special education. The total number of credit hours paid for in 2017 was 3,926. 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. 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 for a series of professional development events we hosted in 2017. The three large professional development events were: the *Supporting the Young Learner with Special Education Needs* Summit in February 2017; and the Early Learning Summer Institute in June 2017; the *Kindergarten Transitions for All* conference in October 2017; and the *Family Engagement* Conference in December 2017. All PDG sub-grantees had the opportunity to participate in these professional development events at no additional cost to the sub-grantees since the costs were 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 2017-18 school year.

The total number of children served overall in high-quality preschool programs funded by PDG is 6,431. This is the sum of children served in years one, two, and three. The increase in number of eligible four year olds served represents an increase from 3% in year one to 6.5% in year three. We believe we were successful because we continued to leverage our partnership with our Early Childhood Development and Health Board, First Things First, and increased the number of participants in Quality First (QF). 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 are measured as they move towards higher levels of quality, receiving a star rating on a scale from 1 to 5 stars. In 2017, 93 of the 127 PDG sites had public ratings; those without published ratings were in their first cycle of assessment and would not have their public ratings available until after their second cycle. Of those assessed sites, 16 were rated 2-Stars, 30 were rated 3-Stars, 38 were rated 4-Stars, and 9 were rated 5-Stars.

**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 3 APR, grantees will provide disaggregated data on the school readiness of the children enrolled and served by the grant. This may include information collected about the children enrolled and received services by the grant during the 2016-17 preschool year. States may provide data from a sample of children (e.g., a sample being used for any evaluation).*

In the Year 3 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.

### **Determining Readiness**

Arizona's Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA) tool was just approved for use by the Arizona State Board of Education in August 2017. Thus, KEA data is not yet available. However, in years one, two, and three of the grant, all PDG students were enrolled in Teaching Strategies GOLD --the statewide required ongoing progress monitoring tool for preschool. 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.” Prior to approval of a KEA by the State Board of Education, a significant amount of work was done to develop an appropriate tool. Arizona participated in the North Carolina K-3 Formative Assessment Consortium to help develop a valid and reliable Kindergarten Developmental Inventory (KDI) --Arizona's kindergarten entrance assessment. To determine the number and percentage of children in the HNCs ready for kindergarten, we extracted Teaching Strategies GOLD (TSG) data from all portfolios for those children enrolled in PDG in the 2016-17 school year. In the school year 2016-17, there were 2,872 children in slots funded by PDG. Of those enrolled children, 2,128 had TSG portfolios for ongoing progress monitoring. We determined 1,938 children (91.1%) were ready for kindergarten. To determine “readiness,” we used the *Teaching Strategies Gold Snapshot Report*. From the report we extracted the number of children who were “meeting or exceeding” age-level expectations upon the final reporting point for the school year. We have an alignment of the TSG objectives to our early learning standards which are the standards we use for a child upon exiting preschool and entering kindergarten. If the child is meeting or exceeding the TSG objectives in the 4-year old color band, then we can confidently say the child is meeting or exceeding Arizona's early learning standards.

In TSG, data is collected in six areas of learning: Social Emotional; Physical; Language; Literacy; Cognitive; and Mathematics. The following is the number of children (of the 2,128) who were “meeting or exceeding” age-level expectations upon the final reporting point of the year in each area of learning:

- Social Emotional: 2,050
- Physical: 2,039
- Language: 1,959
- Cognitive: 2,059
- Literacy: 2,087
- Mathematics: 1,905

In 2017, as an enhanced part of Arizona's participation in the North Carolina Consortium, ADE continued its 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.

### **Assessments and Instruments**

In 2017, sub-grantees were required to assess children's growth and development in alignment with the AzELS and the five essential domains of school readiness through a variety of integrated methods, including screenings, observational records, work samples, and documentation provided by families. *Teaching Strategies Gold* was approved as a valid and reliable assessment by Arizona's State Board of Education in 2010 for use in all preschool education programs, including early childhood special

education, and has been adopted by Arizona Head Start programs.

### **Training and Test Quality**

In 2017, ADE-ECE worked with TSG staff to provide six *Introduction to Teaching Strategies GOLD* two-day trainings for teachers, and two *Teaching Strategies GOLD for Administrators* two-day trainings. In addition, other professional development opportunities on the elements of comprehensive assessment systems were made available to all PDG sub-grantees.

### **Data and Usage**

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." A key accomplishment of the PDG in year one 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. In our original application, we said our participation in AZDash would 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.

### **Plans for Year 4 Reporting**

We anticipate having data from the KDI available in Year 4. Since this will be a transitional year for us, and we will be setting a baseline, we will continue to use data collected through Teaching Strategies GOLD to determine children's readiness for kindergarten. This aligns with Arizona's move to recognize the individuality of each learner through its focused implementation of the Arizona Multi-tier System of Supports (MTSS). ADE is moving forward with vision and leadership provided from multiple divisions within the department to begin supporting MTSS. MTSS is a coherent continuum of system-wide, data-based problem solving practices supporting a rapid response to the academic and behavioral needs for all students; gifted, general, remedial, and special education. This comprehensive system of supports includes assessments (universal screening, diagnostic, progress monitoring, formative, and outcome), research-based instruction, and interventions. This instruction/intervention is delivered across multiple tiers dependent on the individual student needs identified by student outcome data.

**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 use 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. In 2017, we provided additional opportunities for PDG sub-grantees to receive professional development on the PGHQ at two statewide conferences.

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 for grant partners to demonstrate compliance and validate quality improvements. The monitoring protocol which described all of the implementation requirements, was provided to sub-granted programs at the start of their funding period. Additional guidance was also included in the 2017 PDG Guidance Manual as a support for programs to demonstrate compliance and self-validate their quality improvement efforts before a monitoring visit with ADE ECE.

The monitoring process is a team approach in collaboration with grant partners. A strengths-based, comprehensive Early Childhood Quality Improvement Practices (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 which 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 child care 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 is 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 2017, the ADE ECE unit provided professional development to the grant partners 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. Technical assistance focused on strengthening the capacity of local PDG programs to collaborate in conducting the ECQUIP process. As a result, all PDG sub-grantees received needed training and were able to assemble their ECQUIP teams to engage in the ECQUIP process. In addition to this comprehensive approach to monitoring to ensure implementation and support at the State level, the ADE-ECE Unit utilizes a fiscal monitoring process to ensure appropriate fiscal soundness is maintained.

In Year 3, the ADE-ECE Unit conducted fiscal reviews of the implementation of PDG sub-grants by seven sub-grantees (ten percent of all sub-grantees). The goal of the fiscal monitoring is to support PDG programs as they work to be good financial stewards and to ensure compliance with Federal and State requirements. The ADE-ECE staff used the ADE Grants Management System, and documents and reports submitted by the PDG sub-grantees to conduct the reviews. The desk review included:

- Reviewing the PDG sub-grantee's budget, current expenditures, and amendments on the ADE Grants Management System.
- Reviewing the PDG sub-grantee's monthly cash reimbursement requests.
- Reviewing the PDG sub-grantee's monthly budget and expenditure data.
- Reviewing the PDG sub-grantee's monthly report to the ADE-ECE staff of the sub-grantee's expenditures-to-date, including analysis of the percentage of funds expended vs awarded.
- Reviewing time and effort documentation for staff working 100% on PDG grant, or staff working a percentage of their time on multiple grants/projects.
- Reviewing the PDG sub-grantee's semi-annual expenditure and completion reports.
- Reviewing the PDG sub-grantee's supporting documentation of payroll expenditures such as signed staff contracts and personnel documents, fingerprint cards, payroll journals and

timesheets, time and effort documentation, and substitute teacher timesheets and contracts.

- Reviewing the PDG sub-grantee's supporting documentation of non-payroll expenditures such as purchase orders and requisition documents, packing slips, paid invoices, zero-balance receipts with itemized details, copies of checks/ warrants, and contracts with third-party service providers.
- Reviewing the PDG sub-grantee's proposals and General Statement of Assurance (GSA).

After completing the seven fiscal monitoring visits, only one finding was identified and corrected immediately by the sub-recipient.

## 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," which is update annually to reflect any changes needed based on lessons learned at the end of each year. 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-ECE 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-ECE ECPS also works with the HNC ECQUIP 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 received weighted points on ADE's rubric for funding allocations. In Arizona, there is a significant teacher shortage, particularly in the early grades. Thus, not all staff met the high-quality teacher qualification in 2016, but we continued to work on our goal 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 was 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. During onsite compliance monitoring, conducted each year, evidence of staff qualifications is reviewed and validated.

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. 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 enrolled 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 ADE-ECE ECPS 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. In 2016, during compliance monitoring, the ADE ECPS reviewed membership identification numbers for sub-grantees' instructional staff. In 2017, ADE-ECE made four large conferences available at no additional cost to all PDG sub-grantees to support high-quality professional development on a variety of topics.

- 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. In 2017, ADE closely monitored ratios and group sizes of programs under this grant. Sub-grantees were required to 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 were 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 2017, children were enrolled in 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 may be offered to extend programs such as Head Start from funding half day slots to full day slots.

- 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 are required to serve no less than 2 children with identified special needs for every 18 children whom may not have identified with special needs. 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-ECE ECPS 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.

- 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, 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.

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. During on-site compliance monitoring, this data was validated. 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. In 2017, during compliance monitoring for each PDG sub-grantee, salaries of the PDG teacher(s) was reviewed and validated.

- Program evaluation to ensure continuous improvement;

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

In addition, the ADE-ECE ECPS conducted 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-ECE ECPS worked with their programs to prepare them for the monitoring by ensuring the sub-grantees had the monitoring protocol in advance, as well as the scheduled date and time of the monitoring visit. The monitoring tool for the PDG-specific indicators included all of the requirements for the grant that the sub-grantees are responsible for. All sub-grantees were monitored for compliance. Any areas of non-compliance initiated an action plan and a follow up visit.

- 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

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 was able to review the analysis and provide additional technical assistance and professional development as needed.

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. In 2016, during on-site monitoring visits, the ADE-ECPS reviewed sub-grantees' documentation of the comprehensive services they offer in their HNCs.

- 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. In 2016, the ADE-ECPS reviewed each sub-grantee's standards during on-site monitoring visits and 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 2017, sub-grantees in each HNC continued their work on the grant scope of work. 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:

### **1. Early Learning and Development Standards**

In 2017, 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.

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

In 2017, 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.

### **3. 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. In February 2017, with funding from the grant, this joint summit was 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 addressed at this summit included 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, and school-readiness. All PDG sub-grantees in each HNC had the opportunity to attend this summit at no additional cost.

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

In 2017, 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.

## **5. 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. Those staff already with an ECE or ECSE certification or endorsement received weighted points on ADE's rubric for funding allocations. In Arizona, there is a significant teacher shortage, particularly in the early grades. Thus, not all staff met the high-quality teacher qualification in 2016, but we continued to work on our goal 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 was reviewed for approval. In order to obtain approval, a Curriculum Check Sheet issued by an Institute of Higher Education had to be submitted with the plan. This Education Attainment Plan is 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.

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

In 2017, 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 Early Childhood Special Education Summit, *Supporting the Young Learner with Special Education Needs*, February 2017. This two-day summit provided an opportunity for ADE and its partners to support capacity-building efforts for teachers, administrators, and others to appropriately support children with and without disabilities. The goal was to share information about services for children with disabilities as well as those suspected of having a disability in early childhood. Session topics included early identification, early intervention, Part C to Part B transition, instructional strategies, inclusive practices, disability specific information and resources, literacy and language development, and school-readiness.
- The ADE ECE Summer Conference, June 2017. This three-day conference was held in partnership with the Arizona Head Start Collaboration Office to provide information related to meeting the varying educational needs of young learners and approaching the work with a holistic view of those students. The intent is to support the work of administrators and teachers of young children in their preschool and kindergarten years. The sessions were on topics such as social emotional development, assessment, language & literacy, family engagement, brain research,

early childhood special education, and much more. This conference was designed for Pre-K and Kindergarten Teachers, Administrators, coordinators and related support staff.

- The ADE ECE Kindergarten Transition Summit, October 2017. This one-day summit provided an opportunity for Early Childhood Quality Improvement Practices (ECQUIP) Teams, including PDG and Head Start representatives, 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 Family Engagement Conference, December 2017. This two-day summit provided an opportunity for PDG sub-grantees and other ECE practitioners to develop strategies to strengthen family engagement in early learning settings (birth to 3rd grade). Our goal was to support programs and families in forming strong partnerships that will improve outcomes for Arizona's children.

Sessions were offered to both practitioners and families with a focus on the image of families as their child's first and most important caregiver, utilizing a strengths-based approach to working with families, building relationships, and engaging fathers.

#### **7. 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 2017, this data was linked to the ADE state longitudinal data system for K-12, AZDash, and was used to inform local decision-making, and to support the use of data to make state-level decisions.

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

All sub-grantees in each HNC are required to develop and implement a comprehensive early learning assessment system. In 2017, to support early learning providers with this requirement, the ADE-ECE Unit continued using the guidance document, *The Assessment Continuum Guide for Pre-K through Third Grade in Arizona*. Additionally, 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, have been developed.

According to the position statement from the National Association for the Education of Young

Children (NAEYC), assessment is, “the process of gathering information about children from several forms of evidence, then organizing and interpreting that information” and “the basic process of finding out what the child knows and can do in relation to their optimum development. With that knowledge, an appropriate plan for effective instructional strategies to help them develop and learn can be identified, monitoring their progress along the way.” As educators, our goal should always be to help students make progress toward achieving their “optimum development.” Using data gathered through the assessment process; administrators, teachers, and students should make decisions that support the best interests of students. Arizona's guidance document was developed to promote best practices for this kind of beneficial assessment process in an early childhood setting. The recommendations are for components of a comprehensive assessment system that utilizes a robust continuum of tools and resources. The recommendations rely on researched and/or evidence-based practices that meet rigorous professional standards that have been shown to positively affect outcomes for all children and families within our communities. This document is intended as a resource for all administrators and teachers who use screening measures, environmental assessments, teacher-child interaction assessments, formative assessments, and Kindergarten entry assessments (KEA).

**9. 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 2017, the ADE-ECE Unit distributed the 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.

**10. 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 2017, 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.

### **Selection Criteria (D)(4) from NIA**

Describe the number and percent of Eligible Children served and the cost per slot.

In Table 1a, we are reporting that there were 3,044 eligible children in Arizona in 2017. Of those eligible children, 2,872 were served in new preschool slots for a percentage of 94%. The allocation per slot we awarded was \$4,600. This allocation was 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 three of the grant period we would provide funding for 3,041 slots in the identified HNCs. However, once we received the grant funding in year one 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 full definition of high-quality preschool programs. Specifically, not all teachers in PDG classrooms met the minimum requirement of a Bachelor's degree and 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. Our request was granted in year one, and while it was great to get us started, this has had a ripple effect on our number for years two and three.

### **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 defined 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 their training on the use of the tool in January 2016. The ADE-ECPS reviewed the tool with their programs and then determined monitoring dates.

The monitoring process begins with a desk review. First, the ADE ECPS reads through and checks the budget and program details of the grant application. 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.

Each local HNC decided if they needed to have a sub-committee of their ECQUIP teams to address the requirements of the PDG 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 communities of practice (COPs). Each HNC team then elected 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." The State Level COP 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. In year two, we enhanced what is offered at the state-level COP by inviting PDG administrators to make presentations on their best practices to the larger group. One administrator provided an hour-long presentation on best practices for layering funding, including PDG funding, in the early childhood program at the school district level.

When a program was awarded PDG funding, 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. 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).

True to Arizona's commitment to an early childhood mixed-delivery system, each HNC in Arizona may have the following programs receiving PDG funds: school district programs, Head Start, child care, faith based programs, home providers, and charters. The preschool children that receive services will eventually be a part of the district so it was imperative that the district be a willing participant. In 2017, the ADE-ECE Unit did intentional work to foster and support seamless transitions between programs, including to and from kindergarten.

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

In 2017, all of the sub-grantees in an HNC were required to participate in the HNC's ECQUIP process or in the local COP. This allowed for aligned processes to develop and discussions to occur between all

participating programs that work with children birth to grade 3 within that community. Each ECQUIP team or local COP established a set of processes for enrolling children most-in-need; maintaining a community wait list; and recruitment. This was a struggle in year one as many of the programs saw themselves as vying for children before other programs got them. In 2016, however, there was less talk of “competition.” Programs were suggested to use program requirements as one way to determine best fit. For example, the threshold for income in Head Start and PDG are different. Children whose families exceeded the income criteria for Head Start could be in a PDG program, or if there were 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 HNCs began to realize that they really were working as a community for children rather than as individual agencies.

In 2017, we also continued to work with programs to ensure they were not supplanting slots or services. We have made it very clear that participation in PDG is to create new 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-ECE 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 annually and receives an ECQUIP validation visit from ADE/ECE. The activities completed by an ECQUIP team bring 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 conducts its compliance monitoring, the quality of the information included in children's portfolios is evaluated 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 QF. Through the assessments conducted in QF, the quality of the classroom and teacher-child interactions is assessed. Professional development and technical assistance is offered to sub-grantees through our ECPS and the coaches at QF.

One of the plans that each HNC needs to complete is a written Kindergarten Transition Plan. Arizona uses a Kindergarten Transition Plan template designed by the ADE ECE unit and is based on the book, Successful Kindergarten Transition by Marcia Kraft-Sayre and Robert Pianta. Each ADE ECPS has

worked with their HNCs to provide technical assistance around the Kindergarten Transition Plan. 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 2017, to support improved transition processes, ADE-ECE hosted a one-day Kindergarten Transition Summit. There were approximately 200 attendees, including the sub-grantees in the PDG programs.

In addition to this work, in 2017, ADE continued its work to prepare teachers and administrators for the implementation of Arizona's Kindergarten Developmental Inventory (KDI) and K-3 Formative Assessment. 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. 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. In 2016, the Alesi Group provided professional development opportunities around the state on the following topics: Bringing Math to Life; English Language Arts; The Significance of Social and Emotional Development; and The Organization of Time and Space. 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).

## 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 3 Target* differs from the *Year 3 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 continuum 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.

Arizona does not have a universal model of preschool funding, but through the First Things First 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 FTF's Annual Report for fiscal year 2016, 65% percent of 918 participating early learning providers met or exceeded quality standards. When combined with providers who continue to work diligently on enhancing the quality of their child care and preschool programs, Quality First has ensured that more than 51,069 children throughout the state have access to a higher standard of early education. First Things First promotes early learning by: completing more than 31,000 screenings to detect developmental or sensory issues that can become learning problems later on; working with almost 1,000 child care and preschool providers statewide to enhance the quality of early learning programs for more than 50,000 young children; funding scholarships that helped more than 16,600 children access early learning in the past year; working with relatives and friends who provide child care to increase their knowledge of brain development and how young children learn; and helping early educators expand their skills working with infants, toddlers and preschoolers. 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, like the Child Care and Development Funds. For the purposes of the grant, FTF funding provided a match in the form of professional development infrastructure. In 2017, that amount was \$4,517,149. Additionally, in year two of the grant, sub-grantees were required to secure local matching funds equal to 20% of their PDG allocation from ADE. In 2017, that amount was an astonishing \$1,885,155.

**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 their first environment 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 Deputy Associate Superintendent for Early Childhood Education is on the IALT, to ensure the interests of PDG are addressed, as well as to update the home visitors on the community achievements of the HNC's. The group meets quarterly to dialogue about the efforts to build the home visiting system in a comprehensive way, including, but not limited to: communication and marketing strategies to increase awareness of the home visiting program, professional development and technical assistance for home visitors, a continuous quality improvement process, and a state and community level program evaluation and management of data collection.

According to HRSA Home Visiting statistics, in fiscal year 2015 (which includes part of 2016), as a response to federal funding, home visitors in Arizona:

- made 30,167 home visits to 4,394 parents and children in 2,261 families;
- enrolled 1,963 new parents and children to the program; and

· served families living in communities in 8 counties across the state, or 53% of Arizona counties, of which 3 counties, or 38%, are rural.

In addition, the Home Visiting Program in Arizona:

· implemented a data-management system and completed the integration of Home Visiting Programs;  
· provided home visiting services to over 2000 families that would not have otherwise received services; and

· provided professional development statewide to home visitors of all programs, regardless of funding, on various topics to increase the knowledge and skill of home visitors, increase staff retention, and improve outcomes for families (<https://mchb.hrsa.gov/sites/default/files/mchb/MaternalChildHealthInitiatives/HomeVisiting/pdf/az.pdf>)

In 2017, with funding from the grant, ADE-ECE was able to support building the capacity of home visitors through collaborative professional development that focused on the Infant Toddler Developmental Guidelines. In 2017, the ADE-ECE Unit provided professional learning on the Infant Toddler Developmental Guidelines (ITDG) in a variety of ways:

· face-to-face sessions;  
· train-the-trainer sessions to collaborative partners; and  
· the continued use on our online Learning Management System to host a recorded webinar on the *Introduction to the Infant Toddler Developmental Guidelines*.

Combined, the learning opportunities have provided professional development on the ITDG to over 600 professionals (inclusive of local education agencies, Head Start, and private child care). Those professionals work with approximately 5,000 children. In addition, these professional development sessions included home visitors, to provide 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-ECE is the administrative home of the Arizona Head Start Collaboration Office (HSCO). In our ambitious but achievable plan, we indicated the HSCO would 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 child care 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. Additionally, in 2017 ADE-ECE collaborated with the HSCO to develop more professional development focused on supporting practitioners of infants and toddlers. Arizona was selected to participate in a peer learning group to receive technical assistance from a national TA provider and the HSCO hosted each of the 4 webinars for Arizona's team. The peer learning group culminated in an in-person meeting in Seattle, attended by the ADE-ECE Deputy Associate Superintendent/HSCO director and a representative from Arizona's Child Care Administration. As a result of this work, Arizona's team (comprised of organizations who have a large stake in the professional development network) has developed a 4-module series of professional development on strong language experiences for infants and toddlers, *Smart Talk: Let's Talk with Babies*. The modules are based on the curriculum, Talk With

Me, Baby, and Arizona's document, The Continuum of Effective Literacy Practices. The 4-part series is presented as follows: An Introduction; Brain Development Research; Language Nutrition; and Language Transactions. Each partner organization has agreed to train a cadre of trainers to be able to deliver this professional development series across the ECE system. The roll out of the modules started with presentations at an Infant Toddler Summit hosted by the City of Phoenix Head Start in May 2017, and has been made available on ADE-ECE's menu of professional development since.

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.

In working to ensure smooth transitions for Arizona's children, ADE joined DES-AzeIP to establish a state team to take part in technical assistance provided by the Early Childhood Personnel Center (ECPC). The mission of ECPC is to “facilitate the development, implementation and evaluation of integrated and comprehensive systems of personnel development (CSPD) for the early childhood workforce serving infants and young children with disabilities eligible for Part C and Part B(619) programs under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)” ([www.ecpcta.org](http://www.ecpcta.org)) . The technical assistance provided, along with the review of evidence-based practices, has guided Arizona to focus on coordinating a professional development system centered on the social-emotional domain of learning. To date, this collaborative work group has established vision and mission:

- Vision: To develop and sustain a cross-sector professional development system that supports a high quality workforce serving young children and their families.
  
- Mission: Provide a coordinated system of customized and applicable professional development to support the use of effective inclusive practices that enhance child outcomes and family engagement. 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. In February 2017, with funding from the grant, a joint ECSE summit was 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 addressed at this summit included 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, and school-readiness. All PDG sub-grantees in each HNC had the

opportunity to attend this summit at no additional cost. The goal was to share information about services for children with disabilities as well as those without disabilities in early childhood. Approximately 200 people attended and survey responses to the event indicated satisfaction and requests for additional topics for the following year.

Additionally, in 2017, ADE-ECE collaborated with the Arizona Early Intervention Program(AzEIP) to complete a joint application to receive targeted technical assistance from the Early Childhood Personnel Center (ECPC). In its joint application, Arizona's state agencies asked for technical assistance in developing an aligned, coordinated professional development infrastructure to support trainings for early learning professionals in the area of social and emotional development, particularly for those who work with children with special needs. Arizona was selected to receive technical assistance from ECPC. In 2017, the ADE-ECE's Deputy Associate Superintendent/HSCO director participated in an intensive, 3-day professional development and technical assistance meeting at the University of Connecticut with the AzEIP team. As a result of attending this opportunity together, and including the Arizona State Literacy Director, the ECPC project's plan has grown to include more work the ADE-ECE is doing to create targeted professional development on the Pyramid Model as a strategy for connecting its strategies to content areas. The first series of professional development modules aims to support teachers in all settings in the mixed delivery system: child care, home providers, district schools, EHS, HS, and faith-based with social emotional development knowledge as it relates to language and literacy.

**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 2017, Arizona used 76.8% of the funding it received to create new state preschool program slots that meet the definition of high-quality preschool programs. Since Arizona does not have a state preschool program, we do not have data for "improved slots." However, we had 276 slots that were braided with Head Start funding, and 76 braided with Part B funds to create high-quality, full-day opportunities for all 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 2017. PDG participating sub-grantees were family providers, Head Start classrooms, district preschool classrooms, private child care providers, and faith-based providers.



## 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, 2017 through December 31, 2017.

We have unobligated funds due to the period of the grant beginning January 1 through December 31; the Arizona Department of Education operated on a different fiscal year.

The two main categories of the budget that were unspent or unobligated were the contractual line item, and the funds to be distributed to sub grantees line item.

- Contractual:
  - Professional Development: \$244,944.25 is unobligated. The Early childhood unit is planning to spend these funds by the end of the 2018 calendar year. Early Childhood Summit-June 20-22, 2018. Fall conferences; Social Emotional Conference on September 18-20 and Family Engagement on December 6-8. For all our PDG sub grantees, the cost of these conferences will be paid with these professional development funds.
  - Data linkages: \$ 226,036 is unobligated. These funds will be carryover and used in conjunction with the amount budgeted for year 4 (\$172,800) to maintain the infrastructure.
- Funds to be distributed to sub-grantees: \$524,852 is unobligated and it will be used to generate additional slots in our high needs communities.

2. Please describe any substantive changes that you anticipate to the State's Preschool Development Grant budget in the upcoming fiscal year (January 1, 2018 through December 31, 2018).

None.

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 partners 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.

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. The Deputy Associate Superintendent for ADE-ECE, who oversees the PDG at ADE, is on the Board. 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.

Since the inception of the PDG Grant, the ADE-ECE Unit has placed a high emphasis on sustainability of funding and in continuity of quality services by embedding it into the scope of work. Through the establishment of the PDG Community of Practice (COP), and using the Leading by Convening model, we have ensured programs have a framework and established strategies for ensuring sustainability of both quality programming and sustainability of funding. This has enabled programs to build and maintain relationships with other early childhood professionals and stakeholders from around the state. Through these COP meetings we have brought in early childhood education partners to discuss other funding and supplemental funding sources available to programs. The Department of Economic Security (DES) shared with programs how to become a DES childcare provider and how their program could apply to receive DES child care subsidy to help in providing a high quality early childhood education to those children most in need. In addition, representatives for the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) shared with programs the use of CACFP has a supplemental funding source for programs. Furthermore, a representative from Quality First (QF) spoke with programs to speak with about continuing to provide a high quality early childhood education and being eligible for QF scholarships in funded regions.

Each of these potential funding strategies/streams was shared with programs so that they could begin to look at options for braiding and layering funding to continue to support preschool programming beyond the fourth year of the PDG grant. To enhance the conversation among programs in regards to sustainability *of funding and continuity of quality services*, we shared with programs the Cost of Quality Tool Calculator. This tool allows ALL programs to better understand and engage in intentional conversations about the cost associated with providing high quality early care and education.

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, 2017 through December 31, 2017.

The ADE-ECE Unit used most of the carryover from previous years to award 200 additional slots, exceeding our target for year 3 of 3,043 slots. However, we still have unobligated funds in the amount

of \$524,852 that we will use in year 4 to award additional slots.