

Abstract

Name of Proposed Project: Colorado Preschool Program: Start Strong!

Applicant: State of Colorado

Overview of the Proposed Project: “Start Strong!” is one of the Colorado Department of Education’s four strategic goals. Through this ambitious plan to expand the Colorado Preschool Program and ramp up its quality, 6,554 additional Eligible Children and their families will benefit from participation in community-centered High Quality Preschool Programs so that they enter kindergarten on track for success in school and life. The Plan involves strong partnerships with multiple state-level agencies and 29 Subgrantees from a variety of settings across Colorado representing urban, rural, tribal and military communities. Through this Plan, capacity, tools and strategies will be developed to benefit the entire state preschool program and enable accelerated implementation of strategic planning to move the Colorado Preschool Program forward with improved quality and accessibility. Subgrantees representing High Need Communities were selected based on local demographic and economic data and estimates of unmet need for preschool. This application builds on the strong systems work supported by Colorado’s Early Learning Challenge Fund Grant and leverages unprecedented growth in the Colorado Preschool Program in the last two years.

Project Objectives and Activities: The project will ensure increased quality in Preschool Programs and expand the availability of High Quality Preschool Programs in identified High Need Communities by increasing options for full-day programming, incentivizing early childhood teachers to obtain a bachelor’s degree, equalizing pay between early childhood and K12 teachers and integrating the professional development and TQRIS work into the project implementation. Building on Colorado’s strong birth to third grade continuum of services and supports, Colorado stakeholders have identified four priority areas for improvement that cut across all age levels: Family engagement, high quality inclusion, effective transitions and support for dual language learners. These areas represent the “deeper dive” in monitoring, technical assistance and professional development throughout the grant program. State infrastructure dollars will support teacher scholarships, principal academies, needs assessment, strategic planning and evaluation activities.

Proposed Project Outcomes:

- 3,099 new slots will enable children to attend a full-day High Quality Preschool Program and their families to access services and supports
- 3,455 existing preschool slots will be improved, 29% of which will directly serve preschool children with disabilities
- More than 500 elementary principals will attend early childhood and P3 academies
- Hundreds of teachers will obtain financial support to attend college
- Multiple tools and resources will be developed to propel Colorado forward with strategic long term planning

Names of Other Organizations:

Ability Connections	Denver Public Schools	Mile High Montessori
Adams 14 School District	Eagle County Schools	Moffat County Schools
Alamosa Schools	Englewood Schools	Montelores ECC
Boulder Valley Schools	Family Development Ctr	Northwest BOCES
Bright Futures	Fountain Ft Carson Schools	REACH
Brush School District	Grand Beginnings	Sewall Child Development
Canon City Schools	Gunnison Schools	South Conejos Schools
Catholic Charities	Huerfano School District	Southern Ute Head Start
Center School District	Las Animas Schools	Thompson Valley Schools
Clayton Early Learning	Mapleton School District	