

*Connecting the Dots for All Wisconsin Kids:
Strengthening WI's B-5 State System and Regional Networks of Support*

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Project Summary / Abstract

Project Title: *Connecting the Dots for All Wisconsin Kids: Strengthening WI's B-5 State System and Regional Networks of Support*

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Under the leadership of Wisconsin's new Governor, a lifelong educator who has put children at the center of his administration's agenda, WI is uniquely positioned to make meaningful and lasting improvements to its Birth to 5 (B-5) early childhood state system. The Preschool Development Grant (PDG) will serve as the catalyst around which current stakeholders and new allies seize the moment and accelerate the Governor's vision for an interconnected and seamless B-5 mixed delivery system that meets the needs of WI's youngest, most vulnerable and underserved children and their families. WI's plan focuses on addressing pervasive challenges around equity, access, quality, and affordability; improving recruitment, retention, and support of a high-quality and effective ECE workforce; and ultimately improving the well-being, healthy development, and kindergarten readiness outcomes among all children ages B-5.

At the core of its PDG work, WI will conduct a thorough needs assessment, based on quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis and extensive stakeholder engagement. These efforts will provide a holistic picture of the state's ECE landscape, as well as a view into overall child well-being, disparities, community resources, and barriers faced by the B-5 population and their families. With direction and leadership from the Governor and First Lady, the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, the Secretary of DCF, a Leadership Council on Early Years (LCEY) comprised of state agency leaders, and WI's Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC), WI will use the needs assessment and stakeholder feedback to develop a B-5 strategic plan – a common agenda to address how all state, regional, and local systems that serve children B-5 will align to produce better outcomes. Simultaneously, the state will invest in efforts to expand parental knowledge and empower parental decision-making, including regionally-based family-focused T/TA and enhanced family communication resources. To accelerate efforts to scale up best practices around equity, quality, access, affordability, and workforce, and to support specific regional and statewide strategies for vulnerable and underserved children B-5, WI will utilize PDG funds to expand evidence-based best practices, pilot innovations, and invest in targeted regional efforts including social and emotional development support, early childhood tribal language revitalization, ECE teacher recruitment and retention, and more. Finally, WI will support quality improvement efforts through Regional Innovation Grants, seed money to leverage collective impact to pilot and implement new or scale up existing best practices or programs, while braiding local child-centered efforts and funding streams. By leveraging enthusiasm for systems change at the state level, and local and regional partnerships and strengths, the PDG will expedite WI's efforts to develop an equitable B-5 system that meets the needs of families and prepares the next generation of WI children to succeed and thrive.

WI's B-5 MIXED DELIVERY SYSTEM VISION AND DESCRIPTION

Home to the country's first kindergarten and a state constitution that champions early education, WI's commitment to early care and education (ECE) is as old as the state itself. WI has many strong ECE programs, partnerships and innovative cross-sector collaborations supporting its youngest citizens. Yet, significant challenges remain and more must be done to reach and effectively support all vulnerable and underserved children and families across the state. In particular, WI has some of the largest access, opportunity, and academic achievement gaps between white and black students in the country, and significant gaps persist for other populations of children, as well. Given substantial research demonstrating that children of color and children experiencing poverty often enter kindergarten significantly behind their peers, and that those early gaps persist throughout a student's academic career, WI leaders believe that investing in early childhood is one of the best investments the state can make.

Under the leadership of WI's new Governor, Tony Evers, the state has an unprecedented opportunity to make lasting improvements to its B-5 early childhood state system. Governor Evers leads WI's executive branch with the core philosophy of "what is best for our kids is best for our state." An educator who served WI's children in a variety of local, regional, and statewide educational leadership roles, including the elected State Superintendent of Public Instruction for nearly a decade, Governor Evers brings a lifetime of child-focused expertise and experience within the B-5 state system to the state's highest elected office.

To that end, Governor Evers has tasked all of his cabinet agencies to connect the dots across state and local programs to better serve all WI children and families, and especially those from historically marginalized backgrounds. Advancing equity is an urgent priority for his administration. State agency leaders – from early childhood, child welfare, education, health,

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economic and workforce development, housing, and more – are stepping up and identifying new connections and partnerships at the state and local levels to promote better, more equitable access, opportunities, and outcomes for all WI's children and families.

While all state agencies are bringing this child-centered lens to their work, the Governor has made key strategic appointments that have direct oversight of ECE programs. Carolyn Stanford Taylor, appointed by Governor Evers to serve as the new State Superintendent and head of the Department of Public Instruction (DPI), and Emilie Amundson, Secretary-designee of the Department of Children and Families (DCF), are lifelong educators who served together alongside Governor Evers in his previous role as State Superintendent. They, along with their leadership teams, share not only a passion for equity and a vision for improving outcomes for WI's youngest and most underserved citizens, but have years of experience working together as colleagues to do just that. First Lady Kathy Evers has also made advancing the social and emotional needs of young children a centerpiece of her advocacy work, bringing needed attention to this critical aspect of child development. WI's legislature is also positioned to lead on early childhood issues, with a dedicated Children's Caucus and multiple members serving on both the Education and Children and Families committees in the Senate and Assembly, respectively. With concerted, dedicated state leadership that puts the needs of WI's children first, WI can coalesce behind a shared vision that aligns priorities, goals, strategies, and resources for children B-5.

Vision: By leveraging enthusiasm for systems change at the state level, and local partnerships and strengths, the PDG will accelerate WI's efforts to create an equitable B-5 state system that meets families' needs and prepares WI children to succeed and thrive. WI's vision is by 2023, all families in WI will have access to high-quality, affordable, local ECE opportunities as follows:

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ECE Stakeholder	WI's B-5 Vision by 2023
Children	All children, especially children of color, children experiencing poverty, children with disabilities, multilingual learners, children in rural areas, and other vulnerable or underserved populations, have equitable access to a high-quality, locally-based system of robust ECE services that support their well-being and prepare them for success in elementary school and beyond.
Families and Caregivers	All WI parents and caregivers have access to high-quality, affordable, culturally and linguistically responsive choices for ECE services that meet their family's needs. Families and caregivers are empowered decision-makers and informed, engaged stakeholders that understand early childhood development and services to support their success.
ECE Teachers and Providers	WI's ECE teachers are paid competitive wages and benefits; supported with ongoing, culturally and linguistically appropriate, high-quality professional development opportunities; and have career ladder opportunities that promote professional growth. Program leaders and training/technical assistance (T/TA) providers understand and promote equity in service delivery, drive knowledge and skill development in critical areas (e.g. mental health, social emotional learning, trauma-informed care); have effective strategies to recruit, retain, and support high-quality staff; and are meaningfully engaged in collaborative efforts to improve child outcomes.
WI Communities	All local communities, with the support of regional and state partners, have an interconnected ECE network that fully integrates health, nutrition, education, and other publicly-funded services that support children's well-being and success.
WI Regions	All regions in WI establish and/or strengthen existing structures to fully support local ECE systems, maximize resources and economies of scale, and engage regional ECE partners, K-12, higher education, health, housing, workforce development, and others in identifying, addressing, and meeting the needs of all children in the region.
State of WI	The state has a coherent, collaborative, and integrated B-5 mixed delivery system that engages current stakeholders while building new champions; provides statewide infrastructure and support, including high-quality data, guidance, and professional development; and targets resources and support to WI's most vulnerable populations.

To realize this vision, WI will utilize PDG funds to build on strengths, address challenges, and maximize multi-sector partnerships that **will improve equity, access, quality, and affordability for WI's children and families and support WI's economy; improve recruitment, retention, and support of a high-quality and effective ECE workforce; and ultimately improve well-being and kindergarten readiness outcomes among children B-5.**

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WI B-5 Mixed Delivery System Description: WI is home to nearly 400,000 children B-5, and nearly 56,000 children enrolled in public five-year-old kindergarten (5K) in 2018-19.¹ Among children B-5, 19% are from families living beneath the federal poverty level and 21% from families between 100-200% of the federal poverty level. 70% are white; 12% are Hispanic; 8% Black; 4% Asian; 1% Native American; and 5% are from other racial backgrounds.² Three in four children B-5 have all available parents in the workforce, meaning parents must often grapple with career sacrifices due to ECE considerations. Quality ECE is a necessity for the vast majority of WI families and a critical part of WI's economy.³

Early Care and Education System: WI's ECE system includes regulated and unregulated child care providers (including family/friend/neighbor providers); Head Start/Early Head Start programs; pre-kindergarten programs (Title I preschools, three-year-old kindergarten (3K) programs); four-year-old kindergarten (4K) programs; home visiting programs, early intervention and early childhood special education programs. Three state agencies, DCF, DPI and the Department of Health Services (DHS), and 11 tribal nations oversee relevant laws in these areas and work together to support children ages B-5.

ECE Program	Description	Funding Source(s)	Children Served
Child Care⁴	DCF oversees child care programming, funding, data collection, and compliance in WI. WI measures the quality of all DCF regulated ECE programs through its quality rating and improvement system (QRIS), YoungStar. Providers must participate in YoungStar in order to accept WI Shares	Federal funds (Child Care Development Fund (CCDF); TANF), state GPR, and private pay tuition.	In 2018, approximately 217,000 children attended regulated child care settings. 19% were from families receiving public child care assistance through the WI Shares Child Care Subsidy Program. Over 74% of children from

¹ Source: DPI

² http://www.nccp.org/profiles/WI_profile_16.html

³ <https://cdn.americanprogress.org/content/uploads/2019/09/12072632/WI.pdf>

⁴ Source: DCF

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	state subsidy payments from families. Programs are considered to be high-quality if rated 3 Star or higher. 52% of YoungStar programs were high-quality in 2018.		families receiving WI Shares were enrolled in 3 Star or higher programs in 2018, up from 56% in 2013.
Head Start ⁵	DPI serves as the connection point between WI and Head Start and Early Head Start programming. Currently, 223 Head Start programs participate in YoungStar, and are monitored via the federal Administration for Children and Families.	Federal funding (Head Start, MIECHV), state General Purpose Revenue (GPR)-funded Head Start State Supplement program (administered by DPI).	In 2018, Head Start and Early Head Start served over 16,400 children (13,497 through Head Start and 2,940 through Early Head Start).
Four-Year-Old Kindergarten ⁶	School districts receive state aid and revenue limit authority for 4K students, who are counted as 0.5 or 0.6 FTE (full time equivalent) if an additional 87.5 hours of family outreach activities are provided. 4K is provided either in a district site (e.g. school) or as part of a 4K Community Approach (4KCA) in which the district contracts with community partners (e.g. child care, Head Start).	State general school aids, local property tax revenue, and a combination of other state and federal sources that support specific children or categorical programs.	In 2018-19, nearly 56,000 students enrolled in voluntary public 4K provided by WI school districts. Over 98% of WI school districts that provide education to elementary grades (411) offer 4K programming (406), and an estimated 75% of WI four-year-olds participate in a local program.
Collaborative Approaches ⁷	Many WI ECE programs have formed local collaborations that include a combination of child care, Head Start, and/or 4K. Communities develop models responsive to their needs while blending and braiding funding to maximize resources, including funding, staffing, and infrastructure.	Blended and braided funding sources from child care, K-12 school districts, and Head Start sites.	In 2018, over 34,500 children were served. Approximately 30% of school district and 42% of WI's Head Start sites offer programming through a collaborative approach, in partnership with 254 local child care sites.

⁵ Source: DPI

⁶ Ibid

⁷ Source: DCF and DPI

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Services for Children with Disabilities⁸	Birth to 3: For children ages birth to three, WI's Birth to 3 early intervention program provides services to children with developmental delays and disabilities. The program is managed at the state level by DHS and administered locally by WI counties.	IDEA Part C, Medicaid, state GPR, county funds, community aids, private insurance reimbursement, and parental cost sharing.	In 2018, about 22,500 children were served (new enrollments, ongoing participants, eligible children who did not enroll, and children referred who were determined to be ineligible).
	ECSE: For children ages 3-5, WI school districts provide early childhood special education services (ECSE) as part of a continuum of services for children with disabilities. Children are evaluated on eligibility criteria and may receive services as part of an Individualized Education Program (IEP). ECSE is administered by DPI.	IDEA Part B, state special education categorical aid, state general aid, and local property taxes	In 2017, approximately 15,000 children received early childhood special education services.
Home Visiting⁹	WI's Family Foundations Home Visiting Program (FFHV), led by DCF in partnership with DHS, is a voluntary home-based program that aims to strengthen parent skills to improve the lives of their children and families as early as pregnancy. Home visitors partner with caregivers to promote social, emotional, and physical development and overall family well-being.	Federal Title V Maternal and Infant Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV), TANF, and state GPR.	In 2018, over 2,000 families served through nearly 23,400 visits in 31 counties and 5 tribes in 2018.

Other Programs and Infrastructure within the B-5 Early Childhood State System: DCF, DPI, and DHS are responsible for administering most state programs that support the healthy development, physical, social, and emotional well-being, and educational preparation of children

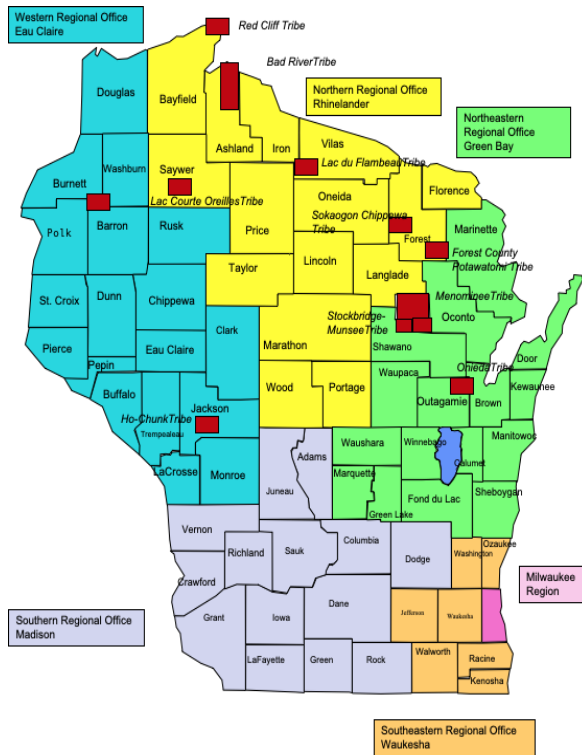
⁸ Source: DHS, DPI

⁹ <https://www.dhs.wi.gov/mch/homevisits.htm>; DCF

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ages B-5. Since 1994, the agencies have partnered together through the WI Early Childhood Collaborating Partners (WECCP),¹⁰ and have successfully developed a number of ECE innovations, including the WI Model Early Learning Standards, which specify expectations for children birth to first grade. Together, the agencies have also advanced successful local and regional technical assistance, including regional collaboration coaches, and the PDG will build on this successful and nationally recognized approach.

Regional Collaboration: Many ECE and family support programs in the B-5 mixed delivery system are implemented directly at the local level, and there is substantial latitude in program



and policy implementation across sovereign tribal nations located within WI's borders, counties, school districts, and municipal governments. As a result, local and regional partnerships are key to the PDG's success. DCF currently supports local agencies administering DCF programs (e.g. child welfare, child care, child support, and W-2 financial assistance). Building on this concept, DCF's Division of Early Care and Education (DECE) is adding staff and additional capacity **across six distinct**

regions (see map) to better coordinate service delivery, provide regionally-relevant technical assistance, and maximize local and regional ECE partnerships. WI will supplement this ongoing work with additional PDG resources as described elsewhere in the application around data

¹⁰ <http://www.collaboratingpartners.com/about/>

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collection, needs assessment, strategic planning, training and technical assistance, parental outreach, piloting best practices, Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) and evaluation. For the duration of the grant period, PDG Transformation Managers will be hired to support each region in achieving the extensive regionally-based PDG efforts included in this application.

Multi-sector Partnerships Supporting B-5 Mixed Delivery System: WI has strong partnerships supporting its youngest citizens that have led to many of WI's successful ECE initiatives, including the development of YoungStar; near universal 4K; WI's successful Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Grant (RTT-ELC), which allowed WI to build an Early Childhood Integrated Data System (ECIDS); to name just a few. There is substantial collective interest, willingness, and enthusiasm among B-5 stakeholders to improve cross-sector policy, process, and funding alignment that results in affordable options for parents and improved health, wellness, and school readiness outcomes for kids.

WI's Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC), the State Advisory Council required under the Head Start Reauthorization Act of 2007 and CCDBG Act of 2014, is the primary venue for state-level stakeholder engagement, needs assessment development, and statewide strategic planning for ECE. A group previously co-chaired by Governor Evers for nearly a decade in his role as State Superintendent, the ECAC is uniquely positioned to accelerate and leverage the PDG needs assessment and strategic planning to its fullest potential, and to ensure sustainability after the end of the PDG grant term. Currently chaired by Secretary-designee Amundson and State Superintendent Stanford Taylor, the ECAC consists of 36 stakeholders in positions to lead and implement change across the B-5 mixed delivery system. As a group carefully cultivated and in tune with the current Governor, WI's ECAC has an opportunity to lead groundbreaking systems change, alignment and transformation in service of WI's children.

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In addition, WI has a broad stakeholder engagement vision for the PDG, as evidenced in other areas of this application. Many ECE system stakeholders have been consulted throughout the development of this proposal, and many more will be directly engaged in one or more of the grant activities. These partners include, but are not limited to:

B-5 State System	Stakeholders Engaged/To Be Engaged in PDG (Not exhaustive)
Parents and Families; Family Advocacy Organizations	Individual families from diverse backgrounds; military families (e.g. USO WI); family/parent advocacy organizations (e.g. WI PTA, WI FACETS, WI Head Start Association Parent affiliate, Head Start/Early Head Start parent policy councils); The Parenting Network; DPI's Parent Advisory Council
ECE Professionals	WI Early Childhood Association; Supporting Families Together Association; WI Child Care Administrators Association; WI Family Child Care Association; WI Head Start Association; WI Alliance for Infant Mental Health; WI Afterschool Network; Head Start Collaboration Office; Milwaukee Early Care Association; United Migrant Opportunity Services; IDEA Part C and Part B 619; The Registry; Child Care Resource and Referral Network; Family Resource Centers; Home Visiting Partners
K-12 Partners	Cooperative Educational Service Agencies; WI Association of School District Administrators; WI Association of School Boards; Association of WI School Administrators; WI Education Association Council; AFT-WI; WIDA; WI Rural Schools Alliance; State Superintendent's 4K Advisory Council; other DPI Councils
ECE State/ Regional/ Local Collaboratives	Children's Empowerment Through Education Network; WI Early Childhood Collaborating Partners; WI Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Board; WI Readiness Equity Network; B-3 Interagency Coordinating Council; WI StriveTogether Partnership (a collaboration across Milwaukee Succeeds, Higher Expectations for Racine County, Building Our Future in Kenosha County, and Achieve Brown County); Milwaukee Succeeds; City of Milwaukee Office of Early Childhood Initiatives; City of Madison Accreditation
Nonprofit and Philanthropic Partners	Kids Forward; Greater Milwaukee Foundation; Reach Out and Read; W.K. Kellogg Foundation; United Way/2-1-1 WI; Pritzker Foundation; Alliance for Early Success
Health Partners	WI American Academy of Pediatrics; Children's Health Alliance of WI; WI American Academy of Family Physicians; Medical College of WI; WI Rural Health Cooperative; WI Primary Health Care Association; WI Office of Rural Health; WI Community Health Fund; WI Primary Care Program; WI Dental Association; Marquette School of Dentistry; UW School of Medicine and Public Health; Children's Hospital of WI;

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	American Family Children's Hospital; Home Visiting Partners
Tribal/First Nations Partners	Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council; WI Inter-Tribal Child Care Association; WI Indian Education Association (WIEA); Tribal Councils representing 11 Tribal Nations located in WI; Tribal Head Start programs; Tribal health orgs
Civil Rights Partners	NAACP; LULAC; Disability Rights WI
Faith-Based Partners	WI Council of Churches; WI Catholic Conference; Lutheran Social Services; WISDOM; MICAH
Workforce Partners	Regional Workforce Development Boards; Governor's Council on Workforce Investment; WI Manufacturers and Commerce; local Chambers of Commerce; Regional Economic Development Regions
Local Government Partners	WI Counties Association; WI League of Municipalities; WI Towns Association; WI County Human Services Association
State Government Partners	Governor's Office; Legislative Partners (including the Children's Caucus; Senate and Assembly Children and Families and Education Committees; etc.); DCF; DPI; and various state agencies (see pg. 21-21)
Higher Ed Partners	UW; UW Extension; WI Association for Independent Colleges and Universities; WI Technical College System
Research Partners	Various UW research partners and orgs (e.g. UWSC, IRP, COWS)

Challenges and Opportunities for Improvement: WI faces significant equity, access, affordability, quality, and workforce issues in serving its B-5 populations.

Equity: When everyone in WI has an equal opportunity to succeed and reach their full potential, everyone benefits. As the former State Superintendent, and during his tenure as President of the Council of Chief State School Officers, Governor Evers led state and national conversations about educational equity, defined as “the act of ensuring every student has access to the resources and educational rigor they need at the right moment in their education, across race, gender, ethnicity, language, disability, sexual orientation, family background, and/or family income.”¹¹ The Governor brings this equity vision to the state’s highest office, and addressing

¹¹ https://ccsso.org/sites/default/files/2018-01/Leading%20for%20Equity_011618.pdf

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pervasive inequities is an urgent priority. WI's growing racial diversity is an asset, and ensuring everyone has a seat at the table, the conditions to be successful, and the opportunity to contribute their unique perspectives, talents, and ideas will make for better policy and a better WI.

While WI's K-12 educational system produces many strong outcomes (e.g. near nation-leading graduation rates, Advanced Placement participation and test passage rates, and ACT scores), many of these aggregate numbers mask persistent gaps among students of color, students with disabilities, students from low-income families, multilingual learners, and other underserved student groups in the state. Substantial gaps are often evident by kindergarten, making the early years a critically important time to address and prevent gaps from taking hold. For example, a 2017 UW-Madison analysis of kindergarten readiness identified that large literacy gaps are evident at kindergarten entry, underscoring the opportunity WI has to make gains by investing in its youngest children. That analysis found 66% of African American children (average 12 points behind) and 70% of Latino children (average 15 points behind) entered kindergarten less prepared in literacy than the typical White child, and almost 75% of low-income children were less prepared than their more economically advantaged peers.¹²

Further, suspensions and expulsions in ECE settings are also a key challenge. National data points to preschool expulsion rates that are more than three times higher than that of students in kindergarten through 12th grade. Preschool age boys are four times as likely to be expelled as girls, and African American preschoolers represent about 18% of enrollment, but 48% of suspensions.¹³

Equity is the highest priority of WI's leadership. WI's PDG process will stress equity throughout all aspects of the plan, and incorporate multiple specific, targeted efforts to address

¹² https://wcer.wisc.edu/docs/working-papers/Working_Paper_No_2017_3.pdf

¹³ <https://psychologybenefits.org/2014/12/13/preschool-expulsions/>

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disparities in ECE (e.g. Leading Men Fellowship, Young Learners Tribal Language Revitalization, training efforts around social and emotional development, etc.).

Access: Based on a variety of measures, WI faces an extreme shortage in infant and toddler care and non-standard hour care (evening, overnight, weekend), and lacks overall care choices for families. Over the past decade, DCF indicates that the number of regulated family child care programs has declined by 68%, and the number of licensed group child care centers declined by 9%. These declines have a significant impact on children and families, and by extension the workforce and economy, particularly in rural areas where family child care is the primary regulated option. In the past five years alone, the number of regulated providers has decreased by more than 2,000. The majority of these exiting programs were family child care providers (75%) and were either rated 2 Star (60%) or not participating (30%) in YoungStar.

In addition to the rapid decline in the number of child care choices, an estimated 54% of WI residents live in a child care desert, defined as “any census tract with more than 50 children under age 5 that contains either no child care providers or so few options that there are more than three times as many children as licensed child care slots.”¹⁴ A lack of equitable child care access and quality ECE options across the state is having fundamentally negative impacts on WI parents, WI’s workforce, and WI’s economy as a whole. The estimated annual state economic benefit of having affordable child care statewide is over \$3 billion.¹⁵

At the same time child care options have declined, 4K programs offered through local school districts have expanded rapidly. In 2019, Governor Evers and a bipartisan coalition of legislators have advanced legislation to expand 4K to full day for those districts who want it, and pilot 3K in targeted high-need districts. Some in the child care community have opposed these

¹⁴ <https://www.childcaredeserts.org/>

¹⁵ <https://cdn.americanprogress.org/content/uploads/2019/09/12072632/WI.pdf> accessed 10/22/19

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measures, arguing that losing revenue from older preschoolers, which helps subsidize care for infants and toddlers, could ultimately force them to go out of business and further exacerbate access issues across the state. Strategic and thoughtful policy decisions will help WI avoid these unintended consequences. While WI's collaborative approach that incentivizes cross-sector partnerships has demonstrated that robust ECE programs, including developmentally appropriate full-day 4K, can thrive together, more work must be done to support and facilitate these local partnerships and expand WI's infrastructure of quality ECE choices to better serve all kids and families. Stakeholder engagement efforts through the PDG will help WI understand, incentivize, and support these local partnerships, while also undertaking extensive data collection and needs assessment related to access. WI's PDG proposal also expands specific best practices, including ECE subsidized professional learning expansion (Teacher Education and Compensation Helps (T.E.A.C.H.)), a shared services pilot, and regionally-driven technical assistance and support, that will begin to address access issues while the needs assessment and strategic planning is ongoing.

Affordability: Child care and high-quality early learning opportunities are necessities for WI's working families. However, the high cost of regulated care puts many options out of reach, especially for low-income families. These affordability challenges mean that the families who could benefit most are often those who are least able to access high-quality child care. For example, the average annual cost of infant care is estimated to be \$12,567, an amount that significantly exceeds average in-state tuition for a four-year public college (\$8,475) and average annual rent (\$9,994).¹⁶ It represents 18.5% of the median family income in WI (\$67,786), and 83.3% of the yearly wages of a minimum wage worker (\$15,080).¹⁷ Average annual child care

¹⁶ <https://www.epi.org/child-care-costs-in-the-united-states/#/WI>

¹⁷ <https://www.epi.org/child-care-costs-in-the-united-states/#/WI>

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tuition in WI for two children is over \$22,000, and the average family spends 30% of their median income covering these costs.¹⁸ As a result, child care affordability is an important driver of economic hardship for many WI families, particularly lower wage earners, many of whom are also people of color and many of whom may already receive WI Shares. While the needs assessment and strategic plan will address this issue more fully, WI's PDG plan funds regional pilots that could leverage collective impact to improve affordability, among other factors.

Quality: WI's YoungStar (QRIS) system defines quality for those participating as a provider rated 3 Star or higher (with the exception of 4K programs, which do not participate in YoungStar and are monitored for quality at the school district level).¹⁹ By the YoungStar definition, the number of children participating in a high-quality program is dropping rapidly. The operation of both unregulated legal and illegal child care is present statewide and affects regulated providers' ability to compete in terms of tuition and enrollment. Information about the quality of over 1,000 regulated programs not participating in YoungStar is unknown, as is information on the approximately 175,000 children from families who pay for care without WI Shares assistance.

While substantial work has been done to define quality in the context of YoungStar, a significant percentage of the state's B-5 population is not currently being served in a YoungStar-rated program. State and local partners need a much greater understanding and awareness of how families' definition of quality is driving their decision-making, a factor that will be a substantial part of the PDG needs assessment and strategic planning efforts. In particular, WI recognizes that high-quality ECE requires inclusivity, cultural competence and cultural responsiveness in its programming and family engagement, and additional aspects of quality that are important to families, including how they determine which providers are safe and trustworthy for their

¹⁸ <https://cdn.americanprogress.org/content/uploads/2019/09/12072632/WI.pdf>

¹⁹ Source: DCF, DPI

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children, should be considered, measured, and incentivized wherever possible. WI's needs assessment will delve deeply into this subject and help stakeholders address any changes needed, including to the QRIS. Further, state and local partners need a greater understanding of the challenges and barriers providers face in achieving and maintaining quality ratings, a factor that will likewise be explored through the PDG needs assessment. Moreover, WI will undertake substantial parent engagement efforts under the needs assessment, strategic planning efforts, and parental outreach activities under Activity 3 to understand what drives parental choices and provide quality information and options to them.

Workforce: The median hourly wage for child care teachers is just above \$10.00 per hour, with the median hourly wage for preschool teachers slightly higher at \$11.64.²⁰ As a result, there is a distinct mismatch between the cost of education, training, and credentials needed to enter the early childhood workforce, and the wages and benefits they receive. Costs and challenges associated with becoming a licensed/regulated provider, or a high-quality provider, may be experienced unevenly across race and other underserved demographics across the state.

Individuals who may have the capacity to have a transformative impact on children and families may simply be priced out of the field. WI will address these and other workforce issues through a specific workforce-focused aspect of its needs assessment, as well as best practice initiatives including funding scholarships for ECE teachers in child care deserts through T.E.A.C.H. and greatly expanding credentialing data available in The Registry. Further, WI will undertake new efforts to engage with workforce development partners through the ECAC, and an outreach summit tailored to business, higher education, and the military, to connect the workforce dots among employers, providers, ECE teachers, and parents.

²⁰ <https://cdn.americanprogress.org/content/uploads/2019/09/12072632/WI.pdf>

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PDG Opportunity: The PDG is WI's opportunity to bring together a broad, diverse, and unlikely table of allies to deeply examine WI's needs and challenges, and work together through a child-centered lens to solve them. The PDG will allow WI leadership to substantially accelerate systems change, involve and engage parents and stakeholders in new ways, and ultimately transform how WI delivers high-quality, interconnected services to all of WI's children.

ACTIVITY 1: STATEWIDE B-5 NEEDS ASSESSMENT

WI will conduct a robust needs assessment, based on quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis and authentic, culturally and linguistically responsive engagement. The PDG offers WI a groundbreaking opportunity to gather direct, honest feedback from: families that use the system; educators and providers that serve young children; the cross-section of providers who wrap around children and families in an effort to help them succeed; and engaged community partnerships across WI that have bridged gaps for children and families. WI leaders want and need to know and connect with what it looks and feels like for families to grapple with the trade-offs, challenges, and real life decisions they confront when facing the challenge of ECE access, affordability, and quality in WI, and the PDG will help WI leaders do just that. The needs assessment will empower stakeholders with better information and understanding about equity, access, quality, affordability, and workforce gaps and other critical issues on a statewide, regional, and local basis, including the wealth of community resources that can be accessed as part of this effort. The goal of the needs assessment will be to provide a holistic picture not only of the availability and quality of existing ECE programs in the state, but also a view into overall child well-being, disparities, community resources, and barriers faced by the B-5 population that can inform strategic planning.

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Scope: The focus of this needs assessment is to uncover WI's B-5 ECE quality, affordability, accessibility, and workforce measures, needs, and challenges in a comprehensive, equity-focused manner for our most vulnerable, underserved, and rural populations. This will provide a more complete picture of what is working well in WI's ECE system, reveal existing gaps, and highlight opportunities for improvement, particularly in preparing children for kindergarten. To address gaps and make improvements, the needs assessment will help the state assess what data is not being captured and why; identify the primary drivers of inequities; and work collaboratively with families, providers, and agency partners to ameliorate them.

Work Plan: Over the course of the PDG term, the state will use multiple methods to collect both qualitative and quantitative data, will engage stakeholders throughout the process, and will produce interim reports and ultimately a final needs assessment report that will form the foundation of a concurrent strategic planning process under Activity 2. Prior to the commencement of the PDG term, WI will map out a detailed timeline of expected data and research deliverables and interim reports on a monthly basis.

Leadership, Vision, and Implementation: In line with the Governor's child-centered vision, WI will utilize the 36-member ECAC to provide leadership and inform the direction of the needs assessment. The ECAC prepares ECE recommendations for the Governor's consideration by identifying key needs, gaps, and priorities for strategic direction to improve the state's ECE system for WI's families. As described in the table below, the ECAC has already done substantial work to prepare for the PDG and to put the state on the best footing to be successful. Going forward, the ECAC will use its December 2019 meeting to address key terms and definitions (including vulnerable or underserved children and rural), collect and review aligned needs assessments, and other complementary work to inform the PDG needs assessment effort.

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By doing significant work prior to the start of the grant period, WI can make the most of the 12-month PDG grant period once it starts.

Timeline	ECAC Activity in Preparation for the PDG
August 2019	The ECAC held a day-long strategic planning meeting focused on foundational efforts relevant to the PDG, including the coordination of efforts around accessibility, affordability, quality, and workforce issues. Workgroups were formed to connect current initiatives around suspension and expulsion, workforce, and family support and prevention, and workgroup recommendations are included in WI's PDG application.
September 2019	The Governor and First Lady joined the full ECAC membership, and the Governor charged ECAC with charting a bold course to better equity and access through the PDG. The session directly informed WI's PDG vision and strategies, and recommended engagement with multiple stakeholders (see pgs. 10-11).
December 2019	The ECAC will work toward a common understanding of key terms and concepts foundational to PDG, including (but not limited to) school readiness, accessibility, affordability, quality, workforce needs, and the definition of children who are vulnerable and underserved, and rural. They will also review other aligned needs assessments (and identify any others that should be considered as part of the PDG needs assessment); and provide strategic advice about the research questions and other components to be addressed as part of the needs assessment.

At the outset of the grant period, Secretary-designee Amundson will convene an interagency Leadership Council on Early Years (LCEY), a cross-section of state agency heads who have answered the Governor's call to engage in bold systems change to support WI's vulnerable and underserved children ages B-5. The LCEY will focus on accelerating strategic connections and systems alignment within WI state agencies whose work affects children and families and will complement the work of the multi-sector ECAC in achieving WI's vision and goals. The LCEY will participate in high-level needs assessment and strategic plan deliberations; attend stakeholder meetings; and assign staff to interagency workgroups. Members include leaders of the following state agencies:

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Agency/Office	Description
Office of the Governor & the First Lady	The Governor's Office will ensure connection to the Governor's vision and will provide strategic direction and leadership. The First Lady will provide leadership, including around social and emotional learning.
Department of Children and Families (DCF)	DCF administers state and federal programs that support children and families, including private child care programs; YoungStar (QRIS); the WI Shares Child Care Subsidy Program, home visiting; and a number of other related state and federal programs that support children B-5, including TANF and CCDBG funded programs. DCF also directly oversees programming related to child welfare, youth justice, and other critical supports and programs serving children and families.
Department of Public Instruction (DPI)	Led by the State Superintendent, DPI administers state and federal laws affecting WI's local education agencies, including 4K programs, and serves as a connection to Head Start and Early Head Start programs in WI. DPI manages several state and federal education programs that serve children under six including Title I and IDEA funded programs, as well as child and community nutrition programs, including school meals, CACFP and Farm to ECE.
Department of Health Services (DHS)	DHS administers a multitude of state and federal programs that fall directly within the B-5 mixed delivery system, including Birth to Three (IDEA Part C), Maternal and Child health programs (Title V), Medicaid, mental health programs, nutrition programs, and more.
Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Board (CANPB)	CANPB is the statutory board charged with coordinating child abuse and neglect prevention and makes recommendations to improve state policy/laws/rules and interagency coordination.
Office of Children's Mental Health (OCMH)	OCMH is as an independent office statutorily charged with coordinating/supporting interagency efforts on child mental health.
Dept. of Administration (DOA)	DOA supports executive branch agencies, develops/oversees the biennial budget for the administration, and has multiple resources to engage in support of this work. The Office of Intergovernmental Relations, which supports relationships with WI local governments and tribal nations in WI, is also housed within DOA.
Dept. of Corrections (DOC)	DOC administers state adult and juvenile correctional programs, including community corrections, and can provide insight into supporting children of incarcerated and formerly incarcerated parents.
Dept. of Justice (DOJ)	DOJ, headed by an elected Attorney General, leads cross-agency efforts, including crime victim services and the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council.
Dept. of Veterans' Affairs (DVA)	DVA supports veterans programming in WI and can provide logistical and strategic support in efforts to work with military families.

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Dept. of Workforce Development (DWD)	DWD oversees state and federal workforce laws and issues and can provide critical assistance in addressing ECE workforce needs.
WI Economic Development Corporation	WEDC leads economic development efforts for the state and is a link to including regional economic development organizations and industry clusters that rely on quality ECE for WI's workforce.
WI Housing and Ec. Development Authority (WHEDA)	WHEDA oversees state and federal housing assistance programs utilized by families experiencing poverty and is ready to explore innovative partnerships that blend housing and ECE resources.

Interagency PDG Workgroup (IPW): WI will establish an IPW comprised of program and policy staff from DCF, DPI, DHS, and other agencies to support WI's leadership, develop materials and work products and coordinate meetings needed to ensure the PDG timeline and activities are completed. The IPW will be led by a PDG Strategic Initiatives Advisor, who will report to Erin Arango-Escalante, DCF's Division Administrator for Early Care and Education and coordinate with Dr. Sheila Briggs, Assistant State Superintendent of the Division for Academic Excellence. Dr. Michelle Robinson, DCF Director of Research, Evaluation, and Program Integrity, will participate in IPW, and will lead a PDG Research Council (PRC) comprised of researchers from the UW System. Additionally, WI will hire a dedicated meeting facilitator who can help lead the LCEY, ECAC, and other stakeholder groups through the PDG needs assessment and strategic planning discussions.

Leveraging Other Needs Assessments: The IPW will assist in data collection and analysis to inform the needs assessment, including collection of related needs assessments and materials from partners that can inform WI's work (examples below). In addition, the IPW will collaborate with research partners to examine relevant existing data (e.g. wage data, market rate information), as well as new information and data collected.

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Needs Assessment Title	Affiliate	Year
MIECHV HRSA Needs Assessment	DCF	2020
Statewide Prevention Scan (Child Abuse & Neglect)	DCF	2020
MCH Title V Block Grant Needs Assessment	DHF	2020
Head Start Community Assessments	WI Head Start Grantees	2018-19
Milwaukee Early Childhood Needs Assessment	IFF	2019
State Child Care Facts	Child Care Aware	2019
CANPB Board Biennial Report	CANPB	2019
YoungStar Annual Report	DCF	2018
DECE Annual Report	DCF	2018
Home Visiting Needs Assessments	DCF/DHS	2018
America's Child Care Deserts Report	Center on American Progress	2018
WI EC Professional Development Initiative	DPI	2018

As data is collected and analyzed, WI will convene the LCEY and ECAC to discuss emerging themes and policy questions and to prioritize findings. WI will create interim topically-based needs assessment reports based on timing/availability of data during the PDG term and, ultimately, a final report that summarizes the state of ECE in WI. The report will highlight issues related to access, affordability, quality, and equity, as well as ECE workforce needs, and provide recommendations, with attention to geographic and economic differences in communities, as well as high-priority populations of vulnerable and underserved children.

Alignment with Logic Model: The WI needs assessment is a key activity that will yield outputs that drive short- and long-term outcomes, as illustrated in the logic model (LM). The IPW will ensure work around the needs assessment (including interim reports) aligns to the PDG logic model and vision statement. The IPW will work with DCF and DPI leaders, the PRC, the LCEY and ECAC to identify and resolve any gaps that emerge among vision, strategies, and outcomes.

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Focus on Vulnerable or Underserved Children, Including Children in Rural Areas: WI's

efforts will focus on children B-5 who are defined as vulnerable or underserved. For purposes of the PDG, vulnerable and underserved children include: children experiencing poverty; children of color, including children from the 11 sovereign tribal nations within WI's borders; multilingual children; children with disabilities or experiencing developmental delays; children in foster care (including kinship care); children receiving in-home safety services and supports; children experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity; children whose parents are accessing workforce programs; children experiencing food insecurity; children from migrant, immigrant, and refugee families; children from military families; children with an incarcerated or formerly-incarcerated parent; and children who have experienced abuse or neglect. Available data varies for each of these populations. For those populations where reliable data is unavailable, WI will work to identify and address the needs of these children through surveys, focus groups/roundtables, and other qualitative measures outlined below.

Rural: According to the WI Office of Rural Health, less than a one-third of WI residents live in census-designated rural areas. Yet, the state has large areas of low population density that are home to more than one million people.²¹ WI will work with the ECAC to address how WI defines rural for purposes of the needs assessment, and will review relevant rural needs assessments (e.g. health care, housing, commuting patterns, etc.) to address B-5 service delivery in rural areas that lack economies of scale, and where ECE choices to families are limited.

Quantitative Data Collection and System Enhancements ██████████: WI's ECIDS and related IT systems will support the needs assessment development. Created through a RTT-ELC grant, ECIDS helps policymakers answer questions and make improvements to many complementary

²¹ <http://worh.org/WisRuralAreas>

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programs and services administered by DPI, DCF, and DHS that help families and communities provide high-quality experiences for young children. To get a better picture of how WI's children are served and how these children fare as they grow through childhood, the three departments have used ECIDS to take advantage of their combined wealth of data.

Agency	Example ECIDS Program Data Available (Not Exhaustive)
DCF	Child Welfare; WI Shares; WI Works (W-2); Child Support
DHS	Maternal and Child Health; Immunizations; Early Hearing Detection and Intervention; Lead Screening and Remediation; Birth to 3
DPI	Student Demographic Data; Enrollment; Retention; English Proficiency

In order to better understand how ECE programs serve children, WI will use PDG funds to make technical investments necessary to expand the ECIDS to include other ECE programs, specifically Head Start/Early Head Start as a first priority. Partners will identify opportunities to add and align information about participation in other programs that support child well-being, including nutrition, home visiting, health care, and other family support services, and explore data improvements related to special education, 4K and 3K programs, as well as community approaches that blend child care, Head Start, and 4K programs. In addition, WI will use PDG funds to enhance the ECIDS User Portal by designing, building, testing, and implementing the ability for persistent IDs which will remain from one Data Request to another.

Unduplicated Counts of Current Program Participants and Mapping: Through the data collection and analysis outlined above, WI will create an annual distinct count of children being served in ECE programs throughout the state that can later be analyzed by age, quality, accessibility, geography, socioeconomic status, and child well-being indicators. WI will provide unduplicated counts by using the ECIDS and submitting a Data Request in the ECIDS User Portal to accomplish the counts on a yearly basis. The annual Data Request will provide a count such that numbers of individuals receiving public benefits or services can be tallied without

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double-counting across programs. The unduplicated counts will be accomplished via the hybrid federated approach which is as the standard for ECIDS. Identifying the number of children statewide awaiting or not utilizing ECE statewide will be addressed through family surveys, described below, and will be a topic for interagency collaboration, as well.

To improve understanding of ECE availability and better estimate child care supply, WI will draw on the expertise of the University of Wisconsin (UW) Applied Population Laboratory (APL). APL will examine family patterns of employment, income and family structure; and commuting patterns by using data from the American Community Survey (ACS) and LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics (LODES) data, including testing assumptions about whether families prefer care closer to home or their place of employment. This work will help identify additional opportunities for cross-sector collaboration that will increase families' access to ECE programs.

Workforce Data Collection: As part of the PDG grant, WI seeks [REDACTED] in funding for the ECE workforce to include or update their professional credentials in The Registry, allowing for in-depth workforce studies, analyses, and future planning. Further, a workforce survey will be conducted and analyzed through the foremost experts at UW and the state NAEYC affiliate to focus on the needs and critical issues facing ECE providers, to be supplemented with a survey of and semi-structured interviews with ECE teachers (e.g. career paths, job satisfaction, retention, etc.).

Public Health Scan [REDACTED]: Lastly, WI will use PDG funding to support regional ECE T/TA staff in performing a public health scan to gather and study ECE policies, procedures, and data regarding health, safety, and wellness. Although health/safety indicators are consistent among regulated programs, inconsistent policies can have a significant impact on families. PDG funds

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would support the development of resources and training for licensors in one region to effectively consult with ECE providers around health and safety policies and procedures aligned with CCDBG health and safety requirements and WI's licensing rules.

Qualitative Data Collection and Analysis ██████████: WI will undertake significant stakeholder engagement activities in order to inform WI's understanding of quality and availability of programming, services, and support for children ages Birth to 5.

Engagement Activity	Description
Family surveys and estimate of children statewide awaiting services or not being served in formal ECE programs	WI will conduct family surveys in partnership with the UW-Madison's Institute for Research on Poverty (IRP) and Survey Center (UWSC) as a first step to build a better understanding of quality. One goal will be to estimate the number of children statewide awaiting/not being served in formal ECE programs. UWSC will survey low-income families statewide, and families from areas experiencing child care access issues, about their perceptions of WI's mixed delivery system in terms of access, quality, cost, and equity, as well as alternative child care arrangements, barriers to early education programs, and how early education arrangements (or lack thereof) have impacted their ability to work and/or complete education.
Statewide listening sessions (Minimum of 18; 3 per region)	WI will conduct listening sessions with families, ECE providers, faith-based community leaders, legislators and local elected officials, employers, and other B-5 system stakeholders. PDG funding will support these activities (e.g. Stipends to community consultants to lead discussions; transportation/ mileage reimbursement; child care; meals; translation services, support for researchers who will be present to capture data and analyze and produce themes).
Regional focus groups/interviews	In-depth interviews, focus groups, and community roundtables will be conducted regionally to help build understanding of the beliefs held and challenges faced by B-5 families and providers related to quality programming and safety; participation in regulated and non-regulated ECE options (e.g., family, friend, and neighbor care); family ECE preferences, and facility and infrastructure concerns, including the extent to which lead and well contamination is a concern. Further, the IPW will perform a scan of available relevant qualitative data, such as data collected during home visiting programs.
Additional community engagement sessions	In collaboration with diverse stakeholders, WI will support community engagement sessions with families and key partners at specified local and regional levels. WI's largest urban area, Milwaukee, will require additional support for community engagement. A local organization

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	based in this area, with reach to neighboring counties, will partner with WI to act as a liaison for researchers, providers, policymakers, and families in order to gather pertinent data and information for the needs assessment.
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ACTIVITY 2: B-5 STRATEGIC PLAN

WI will utilize interim needs assessment reports created under Activity 1 to guide and inform the concurrent development of a draft strategic plan in consultation with the LCEY and ECAC as described above; undertake a significant stakeholder outreach campaign to generate feedback on the draft strategic plan; and revise a final strategic plan. The final plan will incorporate stakeholder feedback, addresses how the plan will increase the number of children participating in high-quality ECE programs and prepared to successfully transition to kindergarten, and metrics to measure success and progress.

Strategic Plan Drafting Process: DCF and DPI (with support from the IPW and PRC staffing groups) will review interim needs assessment reports, discuss emerging themes, identify potential strategies, and develop work plans, and will strategize with the LCEY and ECAC to create action steps that advance the state’s vision for its B-5 mixed-delivery system, including:

Strategic Plan Area	Action Step
Goals, Strategies, Outcomes	Identify clear policy goals, strategies, timelines and measurable outcomes for collaboration on behalf of young children and families;
Opportunities, Barriers	Identify opportunities for and barriers to collaboration and program coordination across the state, including among state, local, and tribal agencies that administer programs in the B-5 state system;
Resource Identification and Efficiencies	Identify the state, regional, and local resources and infrastructure involved in improving service delivery and quality choices for families and opportunities for alignment and efficiencies;
Stakeholder Engagement	Identify multi-sector partners to be engaged in this effort, including, but not limited to school districts/local education agencies; Head Start providers; child care providers, health providers, local government; tribal nations; business and workforce development leaders; community-based organizations; faith-based organizations, and elected officials;

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Organizational Capacity	Establishing cross-agency teams and work plans to jointly improve ECE and other B-5 state services for children and families, and including how leadership will support the work;
Data Utilization	Utilize the needs assessment and other relevant data, identify key metrics to measure progress toward outcomes around child well-being, service delivery, and school readiness;
Coherence Across State Systems	Promote coherence across state systems to ensure efforts to align and coordinate services across the B-5 state system can be achieved and sustained, including the identification of state or national technical assistance partners available to support WI's efforts.

Leadership Role of the ECAC: A standing body, the ECAC will convene to review interim needs assessment reports; assist in the collection and analysis of other strategic plans; coordinate with the LCEY; offer feedback to initial draft strategic plan; engage other stakeholders, etc. Prior to the ECAC's convenings, the IPW will synthesize plans and goals already in progress in the ECE community across WI, and will ensure that any new or updated federal, state, and local law changes are addressed, including the requirements of the CCDBG, Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), and Head Start. The ECAC will provide high-level direction in authoring the strategic plan, and will serve as the primary cross-sector ECE body to monitor and sustain implementation. As previously noted, the ECAC has already spent considerable time and effort in 2019 identifying PDG priorities, including key elements desired in WI's strategic plan summarized in the table below:

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ECAC Feedback on Shared Vision	ECAC Feedback on Shared Agenda
<p>A shared state ECE vision should address the ECE system at the state and local levels and should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure seamless, coordinated and contextualized child and family-centered supports and services that are culturally and linguistically responsive; • Focus on social/emotional development and trauma-informed practices; • Directly align to transition into kindergarten and elementary school; and • Encourage and incentivize the sharing and implementation of innovative and sustainable practices. 	<p>A shared ECE agenda should focus on cross-sector networks and increase (at a minimum):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authentic family engagement; • Developmentally appropriate practices; • Evidence-based social emotional learning training (e.g. Pyramid Model, Triple P, Conscious Discipline); • Health, Infant & Early Childhood Mental Health • Family support services, such as home visiting, home safety, and nutrition consultation; • Infant/toddler training and coaching; • Provider mentors; • Shared services model delivery; • Access to family and center-based providers; • Quality of current providers (focus on 2-star providers); • Utilization of WI Shares; • Pre- and in-service scholarships and apprenticeships; • Public awareness about the importance of high-quality ECE experiences; • Recruitment and retention of ECE staff; • Provider understanding of cross-sector systems; • Consistent, culturally and linguistically appropriate and accessible messaging; and • Business community engagement and funding.

LCEY Engagement: As previously noted, the LCEY will be comprised of state agency leaders who will direct the work of their agencies to promote coherence across B-5 ECE and family service delivery, in line with the Governor’s vision and direction. The LCEY will provide high-level guidance and direction into the development of the strategic plan, specific action steps, and outcome measurements. The LCEY will also use a multitude of existing stakeholder forums to generate feedback on the plan from partners who support child well-being. For example, DCF Secretary-designee Amundson has joined the Governor’s Council on Workforce Investment (CWI) as a strategic partner, and the current chair of the CWI is also a member of the ECAC.

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DCF also convenes a number of groups to be engaged for feedback, including the Youth Advisory Council. State Superintendent Stanford Taylor convenes a number of ongoing relevant groups that can provide feedback, including a Parent Advisory Council, a 4K Advisory Council, a Special Education Council, and the State Superintendent’s Equity Council, to name a few.

These forums allow for greater use of existing resources and relevant contributions by a broader set of stakeholders. In addition to the many existing opportunities for engagement within DCF and DPI, the LCEY can identify new communities and stakeholders and/or identify untapped, underutilized, or unaligned resources in the context of the B-5 State System.

Leveraging Aligned Partnerships and Resources: In addition to those noted above, multiple multi-sector efforts and partnerships will be leveraged as part of both the needs assessment and the strategic plan. A small sampling of the types of aligned partnerships and projects include:

Example Partnership	Activities (Not exhaustive)
WI Early Childhood Association	WI's NAEYC affiliate and advocacy leader, WECA supports multiple aligned activities, grant projects, and other efforts integrated into the PDG. (e.g. T.E.A.C.H Program; Shared Services Network, etc.)
Supporting Families Together Association (SFTA)	SFTA advocates, educates and builds WI’s capacity to deliver high-quality ECE experiences to all children; and has multiple aligned efforts related to ECE programs (e.g. Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies and Family Resource Centers) and relevant to PDG strategic plan efforts.
Kids Forward	Kids Forward advocates and researches issues related to ECE, equity, family economic security, etc. and is engaged in grant activities around equity in early learning (Alliance for Early Success grant); Farm to ECE (W.K.Kellogg Foundation grant; Nemours Foundation grant); impact of federal assistance programs on healthy eating (Robert Wood Johnson Foundation grant); and other activities that will support PDG efforts. ²²
Pritzker Foundation/WI Infant and Toddler Policy Project	Supporting WECA's WI Infant Toddler Policy Project focused on improving access, affordability, quality of infant and toddler care and addressing ECE workforce issues, this effort has joined together many aligned partners to develop a policy agenda that will directly align with PDG goals and activities. WI can build substantially off this work.

²² Source: Kids Forward

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Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Board	PDG will leverage multiple ongoing efforts, including the Strengthening Families Protective Framework; Positive Parenting Program; Triple P and other grant-funded efforts.
Governor's Council on Workforce Investment	Required under the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, this cross-sector group advises the Governor on workforce issues, and will support PDG needs assessment, strategic planning, and more.
The Registry	Supports professional development and credentialing of teachers in the ECE field and will be leveraged through the PDG needs assessment to understand ECE workforce issues.
53206	New effort funded in WI's 2019-21 WI biennial budget to support high-quality ECE in the City of Milwaukee, to be incorporated as part of strategic planning.
City of Milwaukee Office of Early Childhood Initiatives	Leading citywide efforts in WI's largest urban center, the OEI leads efforts aligned with PDG, including Family Read, Play, and Learn grants.
WI Partnership	The WI Partnership network, an affiliate of Strive Together, includes Achieve Brown County (Green Bay, WI), Building Our Future (Kenosha, WI), Higher Expectations for Racine County (Racine, WI), and Milwaukee Succeeds (Milwaukee, WI). WI Partnership will focus on advancing ECE policy change.
Medical College of WI	Multiple PDG-aligned efforts including Research in Early Childhood Development by Improving Resiliency and Equity (REDIRECT), a grant to "develop a conceptual framework and data infrastructure, and build capacity to measure and explore disparities in resiliency in early childhood development in Milwaukee; examine the contributing factors to disparities, protective factors for resilience, and outcomes in ECE at individual, family, community, and societal levels; and evaluate policies and develop community-engaged interventions to improve outcomes." ²³ Additional aligned efforts include supporting Shared Service Networks.
University of Wisconsin	As a research and evaluation partner of DCF and DPI, including for the PDG, UW-Madison has multiple grants, research projects, and resources available for WI to leverage as part of its PDG efforts (e.g. CCDBG evaluation, Preschool Policy Partnership Grants, etc.).

Based on available interim needs assessment reports and after generating feedback from the Governor's Office, the LCEY, ECAC, the IPW will draft an initial version of the strategic plan for review by the end of the second quarter of the PDG term. As additional aspects of the needs assessment are completed throughout the PDG term, WI will continue to utilize this stakeholder process to update and refine the draft, with the goal of a final draft strategic plan near

²³ Source: Medical College of WI

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the beginning of the fourth quarter (Months 9/10) of the PDG term.

Stakeholder Engagement Campaign [REDACTED]: WI will engage in a statewide stakeholder engagement campaign to generate strategic plan feedback during Months 6-9. The state will use both online and in-person mechanisms to reach diverse individuals and organizations (see pg. 11-12), including surveys, focus groups, and in-person meetings and roundtables. Specifically:

Activity	Funding	Description
Regional Feedback Sessions on Strategic Plan	[REDACTED]	The state will use PDG funds to support a minimum of 12 regional listening sessions (2/region). These sessions will share how the state has incorporated and addressed the feedback received during the needs assessment phase of the project, and solicit feedback from stakeholders about the draft strategic plan, including any changes needed. Legislators, local leaders, and other stakeholders will be invited and engaged.
Workforce Summit	[REDACTED]	The LCEY and ECAC will host a summit for business leaders, higher education leaders, and representatives from the military and veterans' community to specifically engage about the impact of child care issues on WI's workforce, as well as issues specific to the ECE workforce itself.
Multilingual Focused Planning and Training	[REDACTED]	WI will engage in WIDA Early Years strategic planning, a program supported through UW-Madison's WI Center on Educational Research that focuses specifically on "the language development of young multilingual children in early care and education (ECE) settings." ²⁴ WIDA partners with state agencies in their efforts to support ECE programs and providers that serve multilingual children and families, and this planning and training will support the state in its efforts to reach multilingual parents and providers through the process.

²⁴ Source: WIDA, <https://wida.wisc.edu/about/mission-history>

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Public Comment	N/A	Members of the public will be invited to attend the regional meetings with the goal of obtaining direct, authentic feedback into the needs assessment and strategic planning process. WI plans a minimum of 18 regional meetings related to the needs assessment (3/region) and 12 meetings related to the strategic plan (2/region), resulting in a total of 30 public meetings around the state to generate public input. Written feedback/testimony will be accepted at any time. The draft strategic plan will be posted online on DCF's website for public comment and will be publicized along with any public meetings. In addition, partners will be asked to share the draft strategic plan with their stakeholder networks to maximize the opportunity to generate feedback and improve the plan.
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The IPW will review and analyze all feedback received during the stakeholder engagement efforts, summarize the findings, and prepare a final draft strategic plan for review by the Governor's office, LCEY, and ECAC. The final strategic plan will incorporate the high-level findings of the needs assessment, reflect the goals and needs of families and communities around the state; identify the commitment of state leadership and partners, and provide the blueprint for the activities that will improve overall access and quality. WI will publish a final report that includes the needs assessment and strategic plan during the final quarter of the PDG term.

ACTIVITY 3: EMPOWERING PARENTAL KNOWLEDGE & ECE CHOICES

As a child's first teachers and most invested stakeholders, parents and families must not only have a variety of high-quality options for ECE, but also must be empowered with the knowledge about early childhood development to inform their choices. As evidenced in the needs assessment and strategic plan development process, parents and families will have a strong voice in identifying ways in which WI systems have, have not, and will support their role as the primary caregiver, educator, and advocate responsible for the well-being of their child(ren). Likewise, meeting the needs of children, parents, and families so that all children are supported and successful is a foundational principle of all the state's efforts.

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As part of the comprehensive needs assessment and strategic planning process, state and local policies and procedures that strengthen, support, and stabilize children and families, such as eligibility for WI Shares and other economic security and child wellness supports (e.g. nutrition programs like WIC, health programs like CHIP, economic security programs like child support) will be reviewed and potentially revised. While WI is developing its comprehensive needs assessment and strategic plan, the state will simultaneously scale up best practices and efforts to expand parental knowledge and choice, increase cross-system collaboration, and empower parental decision-making.

Leveraging Statewide Resources: WI has numerous statewide resources and structures to promote family engagement in their child’s development and successful transitions from ECE into elementary school. However, these are scattered among the ECE systems, and are not easily accessible to providers and families. For regional and local efforts to support ECE providers and families to be successful, WI must better align its family engagement, department, and program collaborations at the state level. This will be attained by:

Desired Outcome	Family Engagement Action
Shared Vision of Family Engagement	Organizational leadership will provide resources (funding, support staff, access to organization/agency decision-makers) to increase state-level expertise and structures, ultimately resulting in a shared vision of family engagement across ECE systems.
Review and Alignment of Family Engagement Policies	A review of each state agency/organization's commitment to, definition of, and guidance (such as Family Engagement Frameworks) around family engagement activities. This includes review of existing policies and/or requirements (such as YoungStar, IDEA Parts C and B, ESSA, 4K family outreach, Head Start parent curricula) to identify commonalities, differences and potential improvements and or policy recommendations.
Updated and Connected Family Resources	A comprehensive review of current resources (for families and providers) that are available within each organization’s website, resulting in updated and connected resources, with a primary entry point, for ease of accessibility by all providers and families.

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Regional Family-Focused T/TA: WI will provide specific T/TA for all ECE programs to support child and family needs, including special education services, health, mental health, and wellness supports, as well as transition from ECE into kindergarten. Key to this success will be strengthening cross-sector relationships that expand access to high-quality care for young children. Using a regionally-based approach, the goal of this T/TA is described below:

Desired PDG Outcome	Regional Family-Focused T/TA Actions
Increase parental knowledge and choice	Families and providers across all ECE programs are knowledgeable of the local and state supports available to B-5 families, especially those who are most vulnerable, as well as how families and ECE providers can access these supports and services. Providing this information to those who work directly with families is critical in developing and maintaining trusting relationships and provides a centralized and familiar process that is easy for parents to access and navigate.
Enhanced ECE provider capacity to support parents	ECE providers collaborate and strengthen partnerships so that families receive consistent and reliable information about programs, their purposes, and how programs can support but not supplant other programs services. This will include identification of shared community goals, and the development of strong administrative processes that result in the development of successful collaboration frameworks.
Efficient use of cross-sector resources to support parents and providers	Current cross-sector resources from DCF, DPI, DHS and Head Start are utilized in an effective and efficient manner. Specifically include information related to family resources, professional development connected to family engagement practices, and transition resources and process among and between B-5 partners. ECE providers have direct and systematic connections with Birth-3 programs and early childhood special education services for children ages 3-5 to ensure all children with special needs have access to high-quality, inclusive ECE services.
Improved services to support kindergarten readiness and transition	ECE programs are able to effectively support and partner with families in planning for and navigating kindergarten enrollment so that children arrive in kindergarten with the needed supports and services to be successful learners. Key leverage points for this include locally agreed upon transition processes and resources. This may include observational, Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ), home language, and other pertinent information and data to support successful, smooth transitions for children from B-5 into 5K.

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To supplement the T/TA work targeted primarily to ECE providers, WI will also provide direct technical assistance and support to vulnerable families as part of its PDG effort by:

Piloting ECE Family Navigators [REDACTED]: WI will pilot ECE Family Navigators in two culturally and linguistically diverse communities. Family Navigators will provide direct assistance to families with underserved or vulnerable children under age 6 to help problem solve and access services across ECE, health, social services, and K-12 systems, as well as local community-based services tailored to meet family needs. Building off a current pilot in Dane County funded by Schmidt Futures, PDG funds will leverage the work from the Dane County pilot, fund initial startup costs in two additional counties/regions, and build the infrastructure between families, ECE programs, state and county public assistance programs, LEAs, etc.

Regional Expansion of Families and Schools Together [REDACTED]: DCF will expand the Families and Schools Together (FAST) parent engagement program in each region and evaluate results to inform future expansion efforts. An evidence-based program, FAST “brings multiple families together once a week in dynamic gatherings. In each 2.5-hour session, a trained FAST Team guides families through a structured agenda of evidence-based activities that support positive parenting skills and reduce family stress while encouraging family bonding.”²⁵ WI will support two cohorts of 10 families in each region for a total of 120 families statewide during the year. Funding would also support attendance for ECE and LEA staff within each of the six regions to participate in the FAST Institute for Family Engagement, which “trains staff to partner with families in support of children’s education and well-being. By blending best practices in teacher training and family and community engagement into interactive, whole-program/school workshops and ongoing coaching, the FAST Institute helps schools to create a more welcoming

²⁵ <https://www.familiesandschools.org/what-we-do/fast-program/program-basics/>

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environment for families of all racial, cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic backgrounds. When families, ECE programs and LEAs are collaborating as partners, families feel empowered to advocate for their children and academic achievement among children increases.”²⁶

Updated Family Communications and Relevant Resources [REDACTED]: Through the PDG, WI will have the opportunity to update messaging and resources across multiple programs that impact children and families. Currently, many state and local programs develop and provide information on an as-needed basis without intentionally connecting that information to other stakeholders in the B-5 system. This has resulted in complex and siloed information, voluminous resources, and inaccessible and opaque communication channels that parents must successfully navigate in order to receive necessary benefits. Accessibility in multiple languages and reading abilities will be critical elements integrated into revised materials. Using PDG funds, WI will work to expand and coordinate family resources in the following ways:

Communications & Resources	Funding	Description
Expanded and Enhanced Family Communication Methods	[REDACTED]	WI will create a tailored texting service designed to increase parents’ knowledge of ECE programs and evidence-based child development practices. Ideally, this platform will demonstrate 2-3 months of child learning gains over the course of a year and be available in at least six languages. Custom text messages will include family and child well-being information with links to web resources and live supports, and will be shared with more than 45,000 families enrolled in WI Shares and nearly 18,000 families using Head Start. Additionally, DCF will build infrastructure to support sending individual text messages to alert families of ending subsidy authorizations and other information to ensure continuity of care during family transitions. WI will leverage matching funds, at least [REDACTED] of total contract amount, as part of this effort.

²⁶ <https://www.familiesandschools.org/what-we-do/fast-institute/>

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<p>Child Care Finder Website/Parent Portal Upgrades</p>	<p>██████████</p>	<p>Using DCF's existing IT infrastructure, DCF will enhance a current child care finder website to identify all available ECE programs (e.g., Head Start, family child care, 4K, ECSE), as well as additional supports connected to these programs (e.g., Russian-speaking provider, mental health consultation, nursing services, CACFP recipient, etc.). Families will have much more extensive, inclusive, and relevant information to inform their ECE choices. In addition, upgrades will be made to existing provider and parent portals to ensure families have electronic access to child care subsidy authorization information.</p>
<p>Statewide Multimedia Communications and Dissemination</p>	<p>██████████</p>	<p>Alongside the development of the Strategic Plan, WI will develop a comprehensive and integrated communication plan that is accessible to all families and focused on the importance of high-quality ECE programs that meet the specific needs of families. This plan will include streamlined resources and communicate research-based brain science content in a seamless, understandable, and actionable manner. WI will:</p> <p>Contract with a marketing firm to facilitate the delivery of this message across the state, especially to low-income, rural, and/or tribal populations as well as to populations that prefer communications in a language other than English.</p> <p>Encourage B-5 mixed delivery system partners, such as pediatricians and family physicians, home visiting programs, health and mental health professionals, LEAs, philanthropic organizations, etc., to disseminate consistent information across the B-5 mixed delivery system, resulting in common messaging around the importance and variety of ECE options available that meet the needs of families locally, regionally, and statewide. Disseminate resources to system partners, including through already established conferences and similar venues.</p> <p>Require the marketing firm to provide 30% in-kind when responding to the Request for Proposal.</p>

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USO Deployment Care Kits	██████████	The children and families of deployed military personnel experience transition and often change in care, especially during deployment. To support children and families during deployment, the WI USO will provide military families with care kits that include resources and materials for children and families, such as journals and books about feelings, and ECE resources that help parents find local ECE programs and services that meets their family's needs.
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ACTIVITY 4: SHARING BEST PRACTICES

To accelerate B-5 efforts around equity, quality, access, and workforce, and to support specific regional and statewide strategies for WI's vulnerable and underserved children, WI's PDG effort will expand innovations and evidence-based best practices as described below:

Regional Expansion and Piloting of Best Practice Models ██████████: Similar to Michigan's Great Start Collaborative and building from Wisconsin's Early Childhood Collaborating Partners (WECCP) networks, WI will maximize regional capacity, local partnerships, and community resources to expand and/or accelerate implementation of multiple best practices statewide. WI will assign a dedicated Transformation Manager to coordinate PDG efforts across each region and build relationships with key partners in the B-5 mixed delivery system. Transformation Managers will be responsible for sharing and disseminating PDG best practices in conjunction with local and state partners, while utilizing other statewide T/TA partners as resources across the region (e.g. WECCP, CESAs, UW Extension, IHEs, tribal affiliates, YoungStar consultants, CCR&Rs, home visiting consultants, Birth to 3 partners, etc.). Additionally, national technical assistance resources from a variety of entities including the National Association of Early Childhood Specialists - State Departments of Education; Head Start; National Head Start Association; BUILD Initiative; National Institute for Early Education

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Research (NIEER); WIDA Early Years; National Association of the Education of Young Children; ZERO TO THREE, and The Alliance for Early Success may be accessed.

In addition to the statewide T/TA capacity, WI will fund the following activities to expand current best practices and to target specific high-need communities and populations:

PDG Activity	Funding	Description
Social and Emotional Development Training and Coaching Support	██████████	<p>WI will expand T/TA and coaching that supports providers' understanding and implementation of social and emotional development framework(s) and evidence-based strategies. These framework(s) and strategies will support WI's effort to significantly reduce suspension and expulsion rates in ECE settings by increasing providers' skills in supporting positive relationships with children and families, creating engaging environments, teaching social skills, identifying and managing emotions, providing teaching strategies, and creating individualized interventions for children. PDG funding would:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand the social and emotional development resources to more providers emphasizing underserved rural areas. • Significantly expand the number of ECE staff trained. • Offer additional professional development to existing coaches and create resources around trauma-informed practices. • Build capacity to provide Practice Based Coaching. • Increase access to coaching support. • Help WI work toward reducing suspensions and expulsions while preparing young children to be successful in school.
WI Farm to ECE	██████████	<p>WI will expand regional knowledge of and access to Farm to ECE to improve young children's access to local foods; improve nutrition in early childhood; incorporate local foods and snacks in ECE-provided meals; enhance children's learning opportunities with food (e.g. planting/gardening); and engage with families. Research on the use of public benefits such as CACFP, implementing food purchasing models, and understanding intergenerational eating habits, specifically within African American communities, will occur in Milwaukee. Finally, as part of the shared services network, nutrition T/TA would be included.</p>
Increase T.E.A.C.H. Scholarships	██████████	<p>The Teacher Education and Compensation Helps (T.E.A.C.H.) program, operated by WECA, provides scholarships to ECE teachers and providers for ECE-related educational costs.</p>

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		<p>Designed to address staffing shortages and low retention rates, these scholarships cover tuition, books, and travel, and support additional compensation for staff that complete a credential in The Registry. Currently funded through CCDF, the demand for this program is greater than the available funds. PDG funding would provide scholarships to more than half of the current waiting list and would be targeted toward applicants living and working in child care deserts. This investment will enhance the quality of trained ECE staff, and address access issues by expanding trained workforce in high-need areas of WI.</p>
<p>Expand Reach Out and Read</p>	<p>██████████</p>	<p>Reach Out and Read (ROR) WI “ROR WI is the statewide affiliate of the national, evidence-based program that gives young children a foundation for success by incorporating books into pediatric care and encouraging families to read aloud together.”²⁷ These funds would address high demand for the program by doctors and clinicians around the state and support continued high-quality implementation of the interventions during expansion.</p>
<p>Expand Leading Men Fellowship Program²⁸</p>	<p>██████████</p>	<p>To expand DWD’s grant program to the Literacy Lab for the Leading Men Fellowship. This program recruits young men of color, ages 18-24, to encourage them to consider careers in education. “A 1-year intensive college and career preparatory experience, participants receive rigorous training in early literacy intervention and social emotional development, ongoing coaching, and work 25-30 hours weekly in an ECE program preparing children for kindergarten. As part of this year-long, residency-style program, participants receive a living wage (currently set at \$15/hr.), a \$120 monthly subsidy to cover communication and transportation costs, and \$2,500 for future education expenses. The goal of the program is three-fold: to diversify the teacher workforce, to prepare the young children served for kindergarten, and to put the fellows on a path to a stable career in education.”²⁹ PDG funds would allow WI to accelerate recruitment of additional fellows in Milwaukee, and pilot expansion of the program to other areas, such as Racine, Kenosha, and/or Beloit.</p>

²⁷ Source: Reach Out and Read

²⁸ Source: Next Door, The Literacy Lab: <https://theliteracylab.org/our-work/leadingmen/>

²⁹ <https://baltimoredesignschool.com/attention-bds-alumni-age-18-24-city-schools-is-partnering-with-the-literacy-lab-to-recruit-young-men-of-color-for-the-leading-men-fellowship/>

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<p>Establish DPI's Young Learners Tribal Language Revitalization Initiative</p>	<p>██████████</p>	<p>In partnership with the Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council (GLITC), the new Young Learners program would provide tribal heritage language and cultural learning experiences for WI's American Indian children as they progress from an ECE program into elementary school. "Heritage-language immersion contributes to positive child-adult interaction and helps restore and strengthen Native languages, familial relationships, and cultural traditions within the community."³⁰ The goals of the program are improving transition to elementary school, reducing achievement gaps, and improved academic outcomes, while addressing the linguistic and cultural needs of tribal communities. Using PDG funds, WI would provide Young Learners grants for programming in ECE programs and school districts that have a significant number or percentage of American Indian children enrolled. Funds would support start up and collaboration costs (e.g., materials, curriculum development, educator training), with Tribal CCDF and/or WI tribal gaming revenue as potential funding sources to support ongoing costs in the future.</p>
<p>Pilot Compliance/Quality Model</p>	<p>██████████</p>	<p>As evidenced in ECE systems across the nation, there are often two separate systems which monitor child care health and safety regulations and high-quality practices, environments and interactions (QRIS). As part of the reauthorization of CCDBG Act in 2014, health and safety regulations became more prominent. Simultaneously, YoungStar continued to enhance the support provided by the state and local technical consultants related to quality practices. Feedback given by providers across the state highlights the need to more closely align licensing and YoungStar T/TA and resources to better support the child care providers in maintaining healthy and safe programs while also focusing on high-quality practices. PDG funds would support the development of resources and T/TA that is inclusive of licensing and YoungStar requirements. Funds would support an impact study and additional professional development opportunities for licensing staff to effectively pilot this new compliance/quality model in two regions.</p>
<p>Pilot Shared Services Networks</p>	<p>██████████</p>	<p>In partnership with WI's NAEYC affiliate and others, WI will pilot two additional shared services networks, consisting of more than 15 committed partners at the local, state and national level. This network will pool resources for providers – including staff, information, skills, and funds – in order to improve the long-term capacity of regulated family and group child care providers in multiple regions. PDG funds would support the first year of</p>

³⁰ Source: Little, McCarty 2006

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		provider membership to the shared services network and will require future funding from employers, foundations and other sources in subsequent years.
Lead Remediation Fund for ECE Providers	██████████	In recognition of multiple bodies of research showing the long-term damage of lead exposure on developing brains and in support of Governor Evers' cross-agency "Year of Clean Drinking Water" effort, WI will use PDG funds to pilot a lead remediation grant fund for ECE providers. Providers may apply to DCF for funds needed to address clean water needs, including: filter installation and maintenance; replacing lead fixtures; replacing lead service lines; bottled water; and clean water filling stations. Applications for use of the fund will help drive a greater understanding of infrastructure and facility needs and inform future policy and budget decisions that support funding lead remediation efforts.

ACTIVITY 5: IMPROVING OVERALL QUALITY

Upon completion of the robust needs assessment and subsequent strategic planning process, the state will have a deeper understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement that exist within its B-5 population and ECE delivery system, and will work to address quality improvement during the later months of the PDG funding period. Identified strengths and needs will vary based on region which will require supporting quality improvement throughout the state in a variety of ways. Once specific regional needs and priority areas have been identified through the needs assessment process described in Activity 1, regional collaboratives will have the opportunity to address them through a quality improvement initiative called regional innovation grants. In the final quarter of the grant period, WI will award regional innovation grants that align with the state's Strategic Plan developed under Activity 2. By focusing on regional collective impact, WI aims to be responsive to unique local needs, leverage financial resources, increase local collaboration, and build ongoing sustainability at the regional level.

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Regional Innovation Grants [REDACTED]: Building off the work done through RTTT-ELC in building the Children's Empowerment through Education (CETE) Network, as well as DCF's successful Youth Justice Innovation Grants program, the state will allocate funding for regionally-based applicants to serve as incubators to fund ECE programs and evidence-based practices that are specific to their identified regional needs, and that address the issues of quality, access, affordability, equity, workforce, kindergarten readiness and local collaboration. The goal of this funding is to leverage collective impact to pilot and implement new practices or programs, or scale up existing efforts, while braiding local child-centered efforts and funding streams.

Once grantees are selected, they will be required to submit detailed documentation throughout the grant period including a budget, project plan, and progress reports. Innovation grantees may also be required to participate in grantee meetings, periodic site visits, and stakeholder presentations. Given the one-time nature of the funding award, recipients will be responsible for developing a sustainability plan describing how they will continue their program or project once their funding has ended as part of the application process. WI encourages partnerships (e.g. among county boards, community foundations, or local businesses) to develop plans for ongoing support and financing to help area children succeed and thrive. Grants will be administered by DCF.

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Regional Innovation Grant Overview

Innovation Grant Goals	Applicants	Example Projects
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leverage collective impact; • Incent innovation, and problem solving at the local level; • Focus on quality, access, affordability, equity, workforce, kindergarten readiness, and local collaboration; • Provide seed funding to programs and practices that can be sustained through additional ongoing funding opportunities and alliances. 	<p>Applicants must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A lead representing the public sector (e.g. counties, tribal nations, etc.) and • A co-lead representing the private/nonprofit sector. <p>Collaborative efforts across multiple ECE providers, K-12 systems and regional stakeholders that leverage collective impact will be strongly encouraged.</p>	<p>Funds to pilot or implement innovative practices that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase collaboration across ECE programs, increase infant/toddler slots, and ensure smooth transitions to kindergarten; • Start-up costs to family child care providers and other providers who are increasing infant and toddler slots; • Stipends to current child care providers for recruiting new providers; additional stipends for supporting new providers in YoungStar rating process; • Piloting the public health consultation support model described in Activity 4 to support key personnel in developing policies, practices, and resources and training licensors to effectively consult with providers around health and safety issues, illness and injury prevention and documentation, infectious disease management, health and safety trainings, emergency preparedness, and additional resources; and • Scaling up regional pilots identified in Activity 4 focused on compliance/quality, shared services, community systems navigation and economic support, and infant and early childhood mental health consultation.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Under the Governor’s broad child-centered vision and with dedicated leadership from the Governor and the First Lady, partners from across state government will engage in unprecedented collaboration to successfully implement the PDG. WI’s lead agency and fiscal agent for the PDG will be DCF, which is responsible for the administration of numerous state and federal programs supporting children and families across WI, including CCDBG, TANF, and other federal programs. DPI will serve as a primary partner in administering the grant, and

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likewise has substantial experience leading, managing, and administering major federal programs, including Title I, IDEA, and multiple other federal programs. Both agencies have substantial experience successfully managing competitive grant programs and successfully partnering together, through the RTT-ELC grant for example. Key staff include:

DCF: WI's lead agency and fiscal agent for the PDG.	
Staff/Capacity	Description
Secretary-designee Emilie Amundson	Secretary-designee Amundson will provide strategic statewide leadership to the PDG effort and will commit a substantial portion of her time during the grant period toward achieving the state's ECE/B-5 mixed delivery system goals and objectives.
Erin Arango-Escalante, Division Administrator for DCF's Division of Early Care and Education (DECE)	Erin Arango-Escalante will serve as lead sponsor and project director of the grant, and will oversee the PDG grant manager, PDG strategic initiatives advisor, and other existing staff across the division whose time and effort will likewise be directed toward PDG success. DECE houses Child Care Licensing and Certification, Milwaukee County Child Care Administration, the YoungStar Program, WI Shares, Operations and Planning, and Program Integrity.
Dr. Michelle Robinson, DCF Chief of Research, Evaluation, and Program Integrity	Dr. Robinson led the development of major sections of the needs assessment and evaluation components of the PDG application, will serve as lead of the PDG Research Council (PRC) and member of the IPW. In collaboration, Dr. Amanda Reeve, DECE's Policy Initiatives Advisor and former RTT-ELC Grant Manager, will support key PDG activities, specifically related to needs assessment and technology solutions.
DECE Regional Staff, including PDG Transformation Managers	DECE will be leveraged to provide strategic support to six distinct regions throughout all activities of the PDG, including an additional 3.5 FTE Transformation Managers who will lead regional PDG efforts during the grant term (e.g. T/TA, regional meetings, partnerships, etc.).
Other key staff at DCF	DECE's Bureau of Operations and Planning (BOP), led by David Timmerman, includes contracts/budget, IT, data, and communications specialists as well as researchers and project managers who will work directly on PDG related activities in collaboration with DCF Division of Management Services. Stephanie Lozano, DCF Tribal Liaison, will facilitate tribal meetings and engage with key stakeholders in the regions.
DPI: DCF's primary state agency PDG partner	
Staff/Capacity	Description

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State Superintendent Carolyn Stanford Taylor	The State Superintendent has made early childhood a focal point of her equity agenda. She will commit significant time during the grant period, including as ECAC Co-Chair and participant in the LCEY.
Dr. Sheila Briggs, Assistant State Superintendent for the Division of Academic Excellence (DAE)	Dr. Briggs co-led PDG application development, will serve as a lead partner with DCF in PDG grant administration, and will provide leadership and direction to the PDG grant manager and PDG strategic initiatives advisor. DAE oversees many programs within DPI, including the Office of Early Learning, which provides support to the ECE community to increase collaboration and coordination at local, regional, and statewide levels.
DPI Teaching and Learning Team (T<)	T<, headed by Tamara Mouw, includes the Office of Early Learning and will provide leadership and support for PDG implementation. Key staff include Jennie Mauer, the Head Start State Collaboration Office Director and Sherry W. Kimball, Early Childhood Consultant. All three have extensive experience implementing large grants, including WI's \$32 million RTT-ELC grant. Additionally, David O'Connor, DPI's American Indian Studies Consultant worked with WI tribes to craft the Early Learners Tribal Language Revitalization Grant proposal and will be the point person in administering grants.
Other key staff at DPI	Kurt Kiefer, Assistant State Superintendent of Libraries and Technology, will partner to ensure all of the data systems are working properly to meet the needs identified in the grant. Staff under his direction include Melissa Straw, Director of the Data Warehouse and Decision Support Team who will lead all data and ECIDS work, along with June Fox, ECIDS project manager who helped facilitate development during the RTT-ELC grant. DPI continues to be the lead agency for ECIDS in WI.

PDG-Specific Capacity: PDG funds will be used to create strategic positions within DCF and DPI to ensure successful implementation of PDG goals during the grant term, while building sustainable knowledge and infrastructure that can be continued after the life of the grant:

Position	Description	Agency
Strategic Initiatives Advisor	1.0 FTE - Project	DCF
Grant Manager	1.0 FTE - Project	DCF
Regional Transformation Managers	3.5 FTE - Project	DCF
Early Childhood Policy/IT consultant	1.0 FTE - Project	DPI

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Other State Agencies: Organizational capacity throughout state government will be utilized to achieve the PDG's B-5 mixed delivery system outcomes, including those previously noted as members of the LCEY. Multiple agency heads have agreed to dedicate at least 20-40 hours during the grant period in furtherance of the Governor's directive to connect the dots across siloed programs to improve service delivery and outcomes for WI's children and families. Relevant staff from across these agencies will participate in the IPW.

University of Wisconsin (UW): Multiple partners from the UW System are contributing to the PDG effort, as described in the Performance Evaluation Plan section below. The PDG Partnership Research Council will include UW-Madison faculty nationally renowned for their expertise in conducting ECE research and their experience collaborating with Wisconsin state agencies and community partners. Core members will include Dr. Katherine Magnuson, Director of the IRP and Professor of Social Work; Dr. Amy Claessens, Associate Professor, Gulbrandsen Distinguished Chair in Early Childhood Education, Educational Policy Studies and Associate Director of the Center for Research on Early Childhood Education; Dr. Alejandra Ros Pilarz, Assistant Professor in the School of Social Work; and Dr. Laura Dresser, Clinical Assistant Professor of Social Work and Associate Director of COWS.

Oversight of Federal Funding and Grant Monitoring: WI uses PeopleSoft ERP system as the financial system to meet the standards of 45 CFR Part 75 Part D. DCF's Bureau of Finance is responsible for accounting and financial reporting for all funds administered by DCF (approximately \$1.2 billion annually, \$618 million of that Federal grant expenditures). It provides procurement and contract services, collection services for public benefit programs, audit and review services, and financial consultation for the program divisions in order to promote fiscally informed decisions and consistent financial policy and procedures. It complies

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with the WI State Accounting Manual, WI State Procurement Manual and internal policies to ensure proper oversight of federal funds and activities. DCF annually reviews and updates its internal control plan and complies with state and federal record retention policies. DCF has have subsystems to assist in subrecipient monitoring, specifically a contract tracking system that tracks information about vendor and grant contracts, a system for payment and contract tracking that collects information from subrecipient for payment and other related information, a provider audit tracking system to ensure receipt of subrecipient audits, risk assessments of subrecipients and audit finding tracking, and a performance report collection and review subsystem.

PROJECT TIMELINE AND MILESTONES

ACTIVITY	LEAD	PARTNER	2020 TIMELINE (By Month)						
			2019	1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10	11-12
PREPARATORY ACTIVITIES									
Hire Strategic Initiatives Advisor	DCF	DPI	X	X					
Hire Project/Grant Manager	DCF	DPI	X	X					
Identify and contract with facilitator	DCF	DPI	X	X					
Hire PDG Transformational Managers to lead regional work	DCF	DPI	X	X					
Establish IPW to coordinate work	DCF	DPI/DHS	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
(1) NEEDS ASSESSMENT									
Collect, review ECE needs assessments	DCF/DPI	IPW	X						
Address federal plan alignment w/PDG	DCF/DPI	IPW	X						
Generate consensus on key terms; research questions; feedback	ECAC	IPW	X						
Work with PRC to identify timelines for interim needs assessment reports	IPW	PRC	X						
Convene LCEY around B-5 vision, available data, identify gaps, establish work plans	DCF/DPI	IPW		X	X	X	X	X	X
Engage other state boards, councils, and groups to gather information, identify	LCEY/ECAC	DCF/DPI		X	X	X	X	X	X

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resources and gaps, and expand stakeholders									
Identify regional and local needs, gaps, assets, facilities issues	IPW	Regions	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Review state, local ECE, health, social services, K-12 policies and practices to ensure seamless system	IPW	LCEY/ ECAC		X	X	X	X		
Collect, analyze B-5 needs assessments	IPW	LCEY	X	X	X				
Review state ECE and B-5 service policies	LCEY	IPW		X	X				
Perform data enhancements (e.g. add Head Start program data)	DCF/DPI	DHS		X	X	X	X	X	X
Explore ideas/options for future automation	DPI	DCF/DHS		X	X	X	X	X	X
Perform ECIDS feature enhancements (e.g. persisted ID's)	DPI	DCF/DHS			X	X	X	X	X
Implement unduplicated count of children receiving services	DPI/DCF	DHS		X	X	X	X	X	X
Conduct family survey to identify estimated # of children not receiving services	UW	IPW/PRC		X	X				
Host 3 listening sessions per region (18 total)	DCF/DPI	IPW		X	X				
Qualitative data collection	UW	IPW/PRC		X	X				
Contract w/The Registry for workforce data	DCF	UW/PRC	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Conduct workforce survey	UW	IPW/PRC		X	X				
Solidify scope of vulnerable/underserved children, including rural	DCF	IPW/PRC			X	X	X	X	X
Develop needs assessment interim reports and final report	DCF	IPW/PRC			X	X	X	X	X
Update and align logic model	DCF	IPW/PRC			X	X	X	X	X
(2) STRATEGIC PLAN									
Convene LCEY to review interim reports; improve coordination/collaboration at state level to increase children served; expand parental options, improve quality, and improve school transition and readiness.	DCF/DPI	IPW		X	X	X	X	X	X

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Convene ECAC to review needs assessment interim reports, facilitate discussion about coordination of services and programs and targeted strategies to better serve children and increase children participating in high-quality ECE. Identify key strategies to include in strategic plan, and plan for broader outreach and input into plan before finalization.	ECAC/ DCF/DPI	IPW				X	X	X	X	X
Participate in WIDA Early Years Planning	DCF/DPI	IPW				X	X	X		
Develop draft strategic plan based on interim needs assessment reports, feedback	IPW	DCF/DPI					X	X		
Share first draft with LCEY, ECAC, Governor's Office for feedback prior to further outreach. Revise draft.	DCF/DPI	IPW					X	X		
Use existing stakeholder forums for feedback on strategic plan	All						X	X	X	
Solicit feedback from engaged partners by region. Host at least 2 feedback sessions/region (12 total)	DCF/DPI	IPW					X	X	X	
Host summit for business leaders/higher ed/military to review strategic plan	DCF/DPI	ECAC					X	X	X	
Provide online comment period open to anyone statewide, push out through broad range of targeted networks	DCF/DPI	IPW					X	X	X	
Review and update strategic plan to ensure alignment with relevant federal and state laws, including CCDBG, ESSA, Head Start	DCF/DPI	IPW					X	X	X	
Review and analyze all feedback received	DCF/DPI	IPW					X	X	X	
Revise strategic plan based on feedback; share with LCEY, ECAC, and Governor's Office for support before public release.	DCF/DPI	IPW						X	X	
Publish final strategic plan, disseminate widely through DCF channels, partners, etc.	All							X	X	

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Revise evaluation to ensure impact/outcomes of activities are being measured	DCF	PRC					X	X	
Revise logic model	IPW	PRC					X	X	
Update communications re: strategic plan	All							X	
Provide updates and metrics to stakeholders	DCF/DPI	IPW						X	
(3) MAXIMIZE PARENTAL CHOICE									
Regional Family-Focused Training/Technical Assistance to support family transitions among cross-sector programs	DCF	Regions		X	X	X	X	X	X
Review and strengthen regional connections to B-3, Early Childhood Special Education	DPI/DCF	Regions	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Establish regional connections with school districts/CESAs to facilitate kindergarten transitions	DPI/DCF	Regions		X	X	X	X	X	X
Pilot ECE Family Navigators	DCF	Regions		X	X	X	X	X	X
Regional expansion of FAST	DCF	Regions		X	X	X	X	X	X
Enhance ECE Finder website and Parent Portal	DCF	Regions		X	X	X	X	X	X
Adopt and utilize a texting service	DCF	Regions	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Develop multi-media campaign	DCF/DPI	TBD	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Revise family-facing websites	DCF/DPI	All		X	X	X	X	X	X
(4) SHARING BEST PRACTICES									
Increase social and emotional training and coaching support	DCF			X	X	X	X	X	X
Expand WI Farm to ECE	DCF	DPI			X	X	X	X	X
Increase T.E.A.C.H. scholarships	DCF				X	X	X	X	X
Expand Reach Out and Read	DCF				X	X	X	X	X
Expand Leading Men Fellowships	DCF				X	X	X	X	X
Establish Young Learners Tribal Language Revitalization Initiative	DPI				X	X	X	X	X
Pilot compliance/quality model	DCF				X	X	X	X	X
Pilot shared services networks	DCF				X	X	X	X	X

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(5) QUALITY IMPROVEMENT									
Draft Innovation Grants applications	DCF	IPW		X	X				
Announce Regional Innovation Grants, collect applications	DCF	IPW				X	X		
Award Regional Innovation Grants to align with Strategic Plan needs	DCF	IPW						X	X

PROGRAM PERFORMANCE EVALUATION PLAN

WI's Program Performance Evaluation (PPE) plan will monitor progress toward the state's strategic goals, objectives, and activities; build a rigorous evaluation infrastructure that will inform continuous quality improvement (CQI) for WI's ECE system, and share lessons learned. PPE activities will be aligned with WI's vision, needs assessment, and strategic plan to ensure WI can measure short- and long-term progress toward its goals to improve equity, access, quality, and affordability for the state's children and families; improve recruitment, retention, and support of a high-quality, effective ECE workforce; and improve outcomes among children entering 5K by 2023. To support the goals of the PPE, WI will utilize existing partnerships with IRP to build a highly skilled, interdisciplinary PDG Research Council (PRC) as defined below.

Evaluation activities will be grounded in a broad and culturally informed framework, and informed by diverse perspectives and methodological lenses, to build evidence needed to understand the impact of strategies in diverse communities, and across populations. This PPE is built around a formal PDG performance monitoring system and comprehensive implementation evaluation, which will facilitate learning and drive CQI.

Key PPE Activities
Analyze existing ECE data infrastructure, identify gaps and make recommendations that enhance alignment between ECE data systems and WI need, and support improved decision-making;
Building data, staff, and methodological infrastructure to measure intended grant outcomes and build evidence-informed policymaking and practice into the state ECE system;

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Using results from the needs assessment and the strategic plan to develop and refine the research/evaluation agenda, including alignment of logic model, going forward;
Completing a process and implementation analysis of grant activities, goals, and objectives;
Increasing state ECE system CQI capacity.

A key goal of WI's PDG is to build state and local infrastructure and capacity to operationalize CQI processes to inform policy, practice, and systems. To achieve this goal, the state must engage in: systematic, meaningful data collection; regular examination of key progress indicators; and timely policy and practice modifications informed by empirical evidence. DCF serves as a hub for CQI having both formal and informal programs. The activities of the PPE will leverage and add capacity to deepen and broaden these efforts.

Organizational Infrastructure - WI and the PDG Research Council: With a longstanding history of performance management and data-informed decision-making, WI is strongly positioned to develop and execute a rigorous PPE that drives learning, improvement, and innovation. To achieve the goals, objectives and activities defined in this PPE, DCF will leverage staff and a variety of internal data and analytic, IT, governance, performance management, quality assurance (QA)/CQI and contract administration resources and infrastructure, including:

Role	Description
Lead	Chief of Research, Evaluation and Program Integrity providing technical assistance and oversight over contracted and internal research and evaluation services;
Staff Capacity	DCF's Bureaus of Performance Management, Regional Operations, Information & Technology; DECE; and the Secretary's Office
Performance Management	DCF's performance management, data-informed, and QA/QI strategies and infrastructure;
Data Management	Data Governance Council and Data Management IT work team;
CQI Resources	CQI resources: LEAN practitioners, home visiting CQI, national home visiting COP; and
PDG Staff Capacity	PDG staff capacity: IPW; Strategic Initiatives Advisor; Transformation Managers

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WI will assemble the PRC comprised of nationally renowned ECE and evaluation experts from WI's universities and IRP's extensive national network of research affiliates to add capacity in implementing its PPE. The PRC, led by Dr. Michelle Robinson and Dr. Hilary Shager, IRP Associate Director of Programs and Management, will both advise WI as it builds evaluation and CQI infrastructure into its ECE system and work to develop the skills, abilities, and capacities of relevant staff and organizations to engage in meaningful evaluation activities beyond the life of the grant. Dr. Robinson will liaison connecting the PRC to the ECAC, LECY, PDG strategic initiatives advisor, regional staff, local stakeholders, via the IPW. Prior to funding, PRC leads will work with staff at IRP to identify any research and evaluation activities that may require review by UW-Madison's Education and Social/Behavioral Science Institutional Review Board (IRB), and will work with these staff to obtain timely IRB approval. PRC staff will work closely with agency staff, as well as the regional and statewide networks, to support the data and information gathering activities associated with the needs assessment.

PRC members, listed in the organizational capacity section of this proposal, were recruited based on content, methodological expertise in ECE; systems change, data-informed decision-making, and continuous quality improvement initiatives. This core team will anchor the PRC, support project continuity and memory, and propel continued momentum of planned efforts. Additional researchers and staff will be recruited to the PRC based on emerging research and evaluation needs identified as the PPE is revised to respond to what is learned through a needs assessment and strategic planning processes. This design will support continuous alignment between resources and capacities available within the PRC, and those needed to support rigorous evaluation and inform improvement.

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ACTIVITY	LEAD	PARTNER	2020 TIMELINE (By Month)						
			2019	1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10	11-12
PREPARATORY ACTIVITIES									
Establish PRC	DCF		X						
Map out detailed work plan	PRC	IPW	X	X					
Clarify roles, responsibilities	PRC		X	X					
Pursue IRB approvals	PRC		X	X					
PERFORMANCE MONITORING & EVALUATION ACTIVITIES									
Development and documentation of appropriate communication processes, cost, implementation metrics, etc.	IRP/ PRC	IPW	X	X					
Review of ECE System and gap ID	IPW	PRC	X	X	X				
Initial B-5 System Improvement Plan	IPW	PRC	X	X	X				
Alignment of division's performance management metrics, KPIs, implementation metrics	DECE	BPM		X	X	X			
Dashboard, methodology development	PRC	BPM		X	X				
Qualitative data collection, analysis	PRC	IPW		X	X	X	X	X	
Monthly meetings to review/discuss data and findings	PRC	IPW		X	X	X	X	X	X
Translating results to decision-making	IPW	PRC			X	X	X	X	X
Proactive evaluation planning to Identify future process and impact evaluation needs (i.e. PDG pilots, innovation grants)	PRC	IPW					X	X	X
Update B-5 System Improvement Plan	IPW	PRC						X	X
Meet with federal TA provider to refine and revise logic model and PPE	PRC/ IPW								X

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and original data. Several studies are planned that will produce a new collection of metrics that will paint a much richer description of the context of WI's ECE system, including its participants, programs and outcomes, and facilitate learning and informed-decision-making:

Relevant PPE Needs Assessment Activities
Development of annual, persisted, distinct count of children being served in ECE programs throughout the state.
Targeted surveys related to the number and characteristics of children and families who are in need of childcare services but are not available (childcare deserts); children who could be in ECE environments, but are not (where are they, why have their parents made that choice?).
Market Rate Survey for Child Care Costs that will deepen understanding of relationships between rates, costs, discounts, funding sources and provider capacity.
Surveys of providers, teachers and workforce to unpack drivers of ECE workforce crisis.
Survey of parents to better understand what they are looking for in ECE programs.
Refined mapping to produce more precise estimates of child care deserts, especially in WI's more rural, less developed areas of state (thus, a clear understanding of access and availability).
In-depth, targeted qualitative research, interviews and observational studies, in all regions to better understand the specific context, needs, barriers/obstacles and strengths.

The results of the needs assessment will serve as a central input in strategic planning, as well as PPE activities, facilitating a deeper analysis of the data infrastructure and clarifying existing gaps in knowledge. The IPW, DCF staff (BOP, BPM) alongside other relevant stakeholders will examine existing ECE system data availability and quality, and identify additional infrastructure, systems, and data elements needed to better capture desired outcomes. The IPW will work with the PRC in translating the results from the needs assessment into decision-making around planned activities and strategies; programs and interventions, and strategic plan development. The PRC will work with agency leadership and staff, and other stakeholders to identify future impact and/or process evaluation needs associated with pilots, interventions, policy changes, etc.; assist in linking findings with evidence-based practices, and develop rigorous evaluation plans to measure the effectiveness of strategies as needed.

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The IPW will develop an initial, draft B-5 System Improvement Plan designed to address critical gaps in the state's ECE data system(s). The PRC will play an advisory role, supporting alignment between the state's logic model and its needs assessment and strategic planning activities, assisting the IPW and Agency staff in refining its B-5 System Improvement Plan. The needs assessment is a critical input for the strategic plan and PPE helping identify new data to be collected; informing what questions we ask, how we collect new data and driving where additional investments are made in support of quality improvement.

Implementation Evaluation Strategy: Implementation research is an essential component of effective evaluation, and plays a fundamental role in examining complex, large-scale improvement efforts like the PDG, which is embedded in a larger organizational environment. Importantly, implementation research provides context for interpreting evaluation results and can provide key "lessons learned" regarding best practices and anticipated challenges that can inform future ECE systems change efforts.

For the PDG, implementation analysis will be led by dedicated research staff at IRP and the PRC, in close collaboration with the IPW. Development and documentation of appropriate process, cost, and implementation metrics will be driven by the inputs and outputs identified in the logic model (e.g., What resources are utilized? What and how many activities take place? Who participates? Are there short-term process outcomes that can be measured?). Further, the implementation analysis will be informed by qualitative researchers who will attend community roundtables across the six regions to document implementation progress, challenges, and best practices, and further align with the outcomes of the needs assessment and strategic plan. PRC leads will work with federal TA providers to refine and revise the logic model and PPE.

Guiding research questions for implementation analysis in Year 1 will include: 1) Have

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grant activities been implemented and completed as proposed? 2) What are the characteristics of new programs and innovations that emerge, and what are the characteristics of the communities in which they are implemented? 3) Who participates in grant activities? 4) What challenges emerge? 5) What best practices emerge?

If funded in subsequent years, the PRC will fully implement the evaluation plan articulated in Year 1 of the project, including an ongoing evaluation of the implementation process. Program implementation will be measured by tracking inputs and reporting on key project activities and outputs. Costs will be evaluated in relation to project activities and outcomes to facilitate appropriate spending on project activities in relation to benefits, and to inform potential funding adjustments. Results from the implementation analysis in Year 1 and subsequent project years will be regularly communicated to and used by LCEY, ECAC and IPW to ensure alignment with the state's vision statement, refine the project logic model and PPE, modify the strategic plan and other PDG activities, and support continuous quality improvement efforts to achieve project outcomes.

Integration of PDG Performance Monitoring Strategy into DCF's Performance

Management COI System: Upon grant initiation, WI will develop a process for monitoring grant implementation, define roles and responsibilities across evaluation partners, and establish processes for communicating and tracking progress of grant goals, objectives, and activities. Evaluation leads will work with IPW to develop clear protocols for communicating expectations, identifying roles and responsibilities, monitoring completion of tasks, addressing challenges, and evaluating results for all stakeholders. In month 1, the PRC will work with IPW to develop implementation metrics. DECE will work with BPM to pursue alignment between the division's performance management metrics, key performance indicators, and metrics related to grant

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activities. The PRC and DCF will work to integrate implementation metrics and program performance outcomes into its performance management/CQI system.

WI PDG Dashboard: Informed by the PRC, needs assessment, and strategic planning activities, IRP staff will work with the IPW to develop a dashboard to track and share progress on key equity, access, quality, and child outcome measures. Dashboards will be a critical input to support CQI processes at the state, regional, and local levels. IRP will work with partners to identify necessary data (either existing or that must be collected going forward), processes for sharing information, and building staff capacity to utilize data to inform policy and practice. Given the regionalized approach of WI's PDG activities, dashboards will be developed to facilitate regionalized- and county-specific views on grant progress. The PRC and IPW will work with stakeholders to develop and refine measures as indicated in the logic model.

Examples of Possible Dashboard Metrics	
Outcomes	Access, quality, and affordability of ECE programming Recruitment, retention, and support of high-quality, effective ECE workforce Outcomes of children entering kindergarten Racial disparities in educational attainment Child health outcomes
Activities/ Outputs	Outreach measures (e.g., event counts, attendance, location) Contracting related process measures (e.g., contract initiation, size of contract, performance towards meeting contract activities) Data on Pilot efforts Grant spending by program costs Attendance at site visits
Inputs	Asset mapping (e.g. physical, economic, organizations, institutions)

LOGIC MODEL

WI's logic model (pg. 65) maps out proposed PDG activities and strategies, within the context of WI's vision and goals for its ECE system and linking these proposed activities and strategies with their associated inputs and outcomes. Each of the activities and associated strategies are

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described in detail in the Program Description section. The logic model lays out how they are connected to specific outputs and short- and long-term outcomes. Performance monitoring and an implementation evaluation strategy will be used to ensure that activities and outputs are being completed supporting continuous improvement using logic model's inputs, activities, and outputs to develop and document implementation metrics necessary to answer the evaluation questions posed in the PPE section, and facilitate decision-making regarding planned grant activities.

Inputs and Investments: WI is well-situated with a significant number of inputs and investments already in place including existing state and local data, collaborative state agencies, a dedicated ECE workforce, a well-established community of engaged stakeholders, experienced agency staff in critical areas of program administration, and a number of complimentary ECE initiatives. These inputs and investments put WI in an excellent position to carry out the activities detailed in the Program Description section and to achieve the outcomes that are critical to meeting the ultimate goal of using the PDG to build on current strengths, address known challenges, and maximize and expand multi-sector partnerships. In turn, this will help align goals and implement strategies that will improve equity, access, quality, and affordability of ECE programs for WI's children and families, support a high-quality and effective early childhood workforce, and improve outcomes among children entering kindergarten.

Logic Model Goal: Wisconsin will utilize PDG funds to build on current strengths, address known challenges, and maximize and expand multi-sector partnerships to align goals and implement strategies to improve ECE equity, access, quality, and affordability for Wisconsin's children and families; improve recruitment, retention, and support of a high-quality and effective early childhood workforce; and improve outcomes among children entering kindergarten.

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Outputs: The outputs described in the logic model are those that will be accomplished within the grant's 12-month period. There are deliverables associated with each activity in each project areas. Outputs range from concrete products (e.g. a completed strategic plan, unduplicated count dashboard) to the creation of regional networks to facilitate community and family story data collection. Policies and procedures will be reviewed, analyzed and revised, and pilot projects will be funded and monitored. All outputs will directly help WI achieve short-term outcomes and will also lead to accomplishing ultimate, long-term goals.

Connection Between Outputs and Outcomes: Outputs included in the logic model are the planned deliverables from each activity associated with project areas. WI will make significant headway toward long-term goals by increasing collective knowledge and ability to collaborate effectively. Increased knowledge and collaboration will be part of the iterative evaluation strategy to foster refinements to the logic model and design activities to implement the plan in future years, which will lead to more children – particularly children of color, and those identified as underserved or vulnerable, attending local high-quality, affordable, culturally and linguistically responsive ECE programs, experiencing smooth transitions to elementary school, and attaining better health and educational status. On a larger scale, WI anticipates an overall reduction in racial disparities specific to child and family outcomes and within the ECE system, and ultimately a more collaborative and integrated B-5 mixed delivery system.

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes		
			Short (1 year)	Long (2-4 years)	
Pre-Grant Work Existing ECE Data Infrastructure State Agency Partners Existing ECE Workforce Engaged Community Stakeholders ECE Programs Complimentary Initiatives Governor's ECAC Political Will	PDG Grant and Matching Funds	1 – Needs Assessment 1a. Coordinated system 1b. Data Gathering and Analysis 1c. Policy Review 1d. Stakeholder Engagement	1i. Regional and statewide networks 1ii. Count of children being served and count of children awaiting services 1iii. Identified alignment opportunities 1iv. Data on the needs of families, providers, workers and the community	A – Increased Knowledge: (1) better understanding of WI ECE landscape and regional variation (2) improved data systems (3) more providers know and implement high-quality practices (4) more parents understand their role in development and are empowered in their decision-making (5) consistent messages about ECE programs Identification of evidence-based ways to improve child and family well-being B – Increased Collaboration: (1) better alignment of policies and procedures within ECE programs and across other related programs (2) multi-sector partners engaged in the strategic plan (3) processes and tools for sharing best practices with providers (4) smoother transitions between ECE and school (5) increased opportunities for ECE providers C – Changes in WI ECE System: (1) removal of barriers and increased opportunities for professional development, education (2) improved tools for informing parents about quality and ECE options	With particular attention to children of color, children experiencing poverty, children with disabilities, multilingual learners and other vulnerable or underserved populations: A – More children attend local high-quality, affordable, culturally and linguistically responsive ECE programs B – More children experience smooth transitions to elementary school C – More children experience improved health and educational outcomes D – Reduced racial disparities in child outcomes, family outcomes, and the ECE system E – Coherent, collaborative, and integrated B-5 mixed delivery system
		2 – Strategic Plan 2a. Using the coordinated system establish an iterative process of feedback and collaboration	2i. Completed Strategic Plan		
		3 – Maximize Parental Choice 3a. Policy and Procedure Review 3b. Communication 3c. T/TA	3i. Revised policies and practices 3ii. Aligned message for families 3iii. Enhanced child care finder 3iv. Multi-media campaign		
		4 – Sharing Best Practices 4a. System Collaboration 4b. T/TA 4c. Pilot Programs	4i. Regional expansion 4ii. Social and emotional T/TA 4iii. WI Farm to ECE 4iv. T.E.A.C.H. Scholarships 4v. Reach Out and Read 4vi. Leading Men Fellowship 4vii. Young Learners Tribal Revitalization Initiative 4viii. Pilot compliance/quality model 4vix. Pilot Shared Services Network 4x. Pilot Public Health Consultation Model		
		5 – Improve Quality 5a. Regional Innovation Grants	5i. Funding to support counties and tribal nations		

Connections between Activity Outputs and Outcomes	
<i>Activities</i>	<i>Connections to Outcomes</i>
Activity One	Needs Assessment
1a – Create regional and statewide networks	By enhancing regional networks to facilitate gathering needs assessment information, diverse perspectives from local providers, organizations, and families are captured and used to inform the strategic plan and subsequent activities, allowing for variations in ECE program needs and T/TA (A1, B1, and B2)
1b – Gather and analyze data	New information from creating an annual, persisted unduplicated count of children being served in ECE programs and attempting to capture the children awaiting or not being served via qualitative and quantitative methods will inform policy decision (A1, A2, and B1)
1c – Policy Review	Reviewing inter and intra-agency policies and procedures to identify alignment opportunities across state and local programs that support children and families will create better alignment (B1) and better policies and procedures (B3, B4, and B5)
1d – Stakeholder Engagement	Using the state and regional networks families, ECE providers, and other stakeholders will be able to provide information, and qualitative and quantitative data can be collected to help better understand the ECE landscape and align policies and programs (A1, B1, and B2)
<i>Activity Two</i>	<i>Strategic Plan</i>
2a – Using the coordinated system to establish an iterative process of feedback and collaboration	Using the iterative process that is planned for drafting and refining the strategic plan and engaging a comprehensive group of stakeholders will ensure the plan is meeting the needs of all communities and families (A1, B1, B2, and B3)
<i>Activity Three</i>	<i>Empowering Parental Knowledge and Choice</i>
3a – Policy and Procedure Review	Statewide resources and structures will be reviewed. Revisions to policies and procedures will help support families and ECE providers in accessing them (A3, A4, A5, B2, B3, B4, and B5)
3b - Communication	The comprehensive communication plan that uses multiple ways to deliver messages on high-quality ECE programs and research-based early childhood development content in an actionable manner will help parents know more about their role in ECE and empower their decision-making (A4, A5)
3c – T/TA	T/TA based on the needs of local providers supported within the regional approach. (A3, A5, B2, B3, B4, and B5)
<i>Activity Four</i>	<i>Sharing Best Practices</i>
4a – System Collaboration	Utilizing the regional approach will increase collaboration within communities and in statewide initiatives (B2)

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4b – T/TA	T/TA will be provided to all ECE providers in topic areas that include social and emotional development and Farm to ECE. Programs like Reach Out and Read, Leading Men Fellowship, and Young Learners Tribal Revitalization Initiatives will connect families to the important role they play in early childhood (A4)
4c – Pilot Programs	Pilots on a compliance/quality model, Shared Services Network, and Health Consultation will improve ECE quality (A3)
<i>Activity Five</i>	<i>Improve Quality</i>
5a – ECE Innovation Grant Summit	Supporting counties and tribal nations to pilot and implement new practices and programs will help families access the supports and programs that best meet their needs and also help ECE providers develop high-quality practices in their programs (A3, A4, B2, B3, and B5)

DISSEMINATION PLAN

WI will produce a final report publishing the needs assessment findings and strategic plan during the final quarter of the grant. Additionally, WI will publish and disseminate the draft strategic plan in order to generate comments and feedback from a variety of sources, as described in Activity 2. Upon final publication, WI will share print and electronic copies of the plan widely within their networks, including with all other relevant committees, organizations, agencies, and groups that participated in the development of the needs assessment and strategic plan, as well as on relevant state websites.

Additional materials and resources developed under Activities 3 and 4, related to increasing parental knowledge and engagement and sharing best practices, are described in greater detail in each of those sections, with the goal of broad, wide dissemination to increase awareness and access to high-quality information and resources across the B-5 system.

PROJECT SUSTAINABILITY PLAN

The Governor and executive branch leadership have made systems change in furtherance of better outcomes for WI's children a cornerstone of their agenda. Further, the WI Legislature

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has made early childhood a focus, as well, through the establishment of a dedicated Children's Caucus, and the strategic appointment of members who serve concurrently on Assembly and Senate Education and Children and Families Committees, respectively. The PDG provides WI with the opportunity to invest in cross-systems collaboration and coordination on a significantly accelerated timeline and affords the state the ability to inform decision-making with a rich and robust needs assessment and strategic planning process. Multiple state agency leaders have committed their time to implementing the PDG activities because they directly align with the Governor's overarching vision for children and families. WI will continue to invest in aligning its B-5 mixed delivery system to expand programs and services for children and families, particularly those that are most vulnerable and underserved, after the grant period is over.

WI will focus on building up and sustaining regionally-driven collaborative partnerships for collective impact, T/TA, and best practices across their regions. To the extent additional resources are needed to continue efforts beyond the initial grant period, existing funds may be reallocated, and new local, state and federal funding sources blended to support projects that have continuing implications (e.g. CCDF, TANF, IDEA Part C and Part B 619, state GPR, etc.).

In addition, the timing of the grant activities aligns well with state agency planning for the state biennial budget process. Agency budget requests for the 2021-23 biennium are due to the Governor for consideration in September 2020; ECAC requests are submitted to the Governor in Fall/Winter 2020; and the Governor's budget is introduced to the Legislature in early 2021. To the extent that projects identified in the PDG require ongoing funding or additional funds to bring them to scale, the 2021-23 biennial budget is a possible option, as well.