



Philanthropy Engagement Project: Frequently Asked Questions

Who is the Alliance for Early Success?

The Alliance for Early Success (the Alliance) provides leadership and makes investments to improve health, family support, and learning for young children starting at birth and continuing through age eight. Investors pool funds and the Alliance works through partnerships because “together we are better and stronger and get results faster.” In order to impact all young children and their families who can benefit from effective programs, the Alliance focuses on advocacy and state policy to sustain and grow them. See more at <http://www.earlysuccess.org>.

What is the Philanthropy Engagement Project?

Many foundations support early childhood programs and direct services, but most grantmakers do not support policy and advocacy. Advocates need resources to either increase their capacity or to support their strong operations. We want to change the way more private funders think about and engage in public policy. The Philanthropy Engagement Project (PEP) is supported by the Alliance and led by the Texas Education Grantmakers Consortium (TEGAC) with support from Frontera Strategy. There are two goals: increase the **number of foundations actively engaged in early childhood advocacy and policy**, and **increase the amount or resources they invest in these activities**. PEP provides education, training, and technical assistance based on the successful models and track records of the Alliance and in Texas.

How Can Advocates and Grantmakers Use the Birth Through Eight State Policy Framework?

The Framework gives grantmakers and advocates focus. The Alliance solicited input from over 200 experts to develop a Birth Through Eight State Policy Framework. Rather than an exhaustive laundry list, policies are based on the latest research evidence and best practice. They address health, family support, and learning because these are the areas that influence life chances, particularly of the most vulnerable children. Crosscutting policies reflect the reality that what children need does not always fit neatly into separate categories. Grantmakers can use the Framework as a guide for choosing proven policy options that fit their priorities. Advocates can use it to support the arguments they make so policymakers can be confident that these “best-bet” policy options lead to good outcomes for young children.

How Can Grantmakers Engage in Advocacy (Beyond Just Writing Checks)?

There are lots of ways all types of foundations can engage. Many grantmakers do not understand the differences between advocacy and lobbying, making them hesitant to invest in policy and advocacy. Some support research and awareness building to inform policy decisions that lead to sustaining and expanding effective programs and services. The Alliance does not support lobbying. PEP will help interested grantmakers understand what they can and cannot do, and help them navigate the advocacy and policymaking process. TEGAC provides support so grantmakers can engage in: forming philanthropic advocacy coalitions, funding and using research to inform policy, reaching out to media, engaging unusual messengers, influencing public opinion and awareness, participating in policymaker education, and informing policy development.

Why Use Advocacy as a Grantmaking Strategy, and Why Engage in Advocacy with Other Funders?

The amount of private philanthropic dollars pales in comparison to public funding for supports for young children. Engaging in policy and advocacy is a way to leverage and increase the impact of both foundation and public sector investments. It can be one of the best tools in the philanthropy toolbox for effecting significant and long-lasting change. Like the Alliance, TEGAC has shown that the impact is even greater when grantmakers work together and contribute to common advocacy and policy goals.

Sounds Interesting, but Where Do We Start?

Every grantmaker has a unique approach and will decide what feels most comfortable for them to do. The PEP is designed to offer a range of supports including:

- Training for grantmakers and advocates about the legal rules for advocacy and lobbying;
- Surveying and interviewing grantmakers to determine common interests for early childhood policies;
- Training grantmakers on effective advocacy strategies for engaging in and supporting early childhood policies;
- Forming and/or sustaining coalitions for early childhood policy and advocacy, including pooled funding;
- Facilitating introductions to advocates, state administrators, legislators, governors' offices; and
- Providing ongoing technical assistance as requested.

How do I learn more?

To express interest in PEP, please contact Lisa Klein at the Alliance for Early Success (lklein@earlysuccess.org).

To learn more about TEGAC, please contact Jennifer Esterline (jennifermesterline@gmail.com) and about Frontera Strategy, please contact Jason Sabo (sabo@fronterastrategy.com).