



Department of Social Services

ARP Act Funding Proposals

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Introduction: The following proposals help create a multi-system approach to handling availability, access, and quality within the early childhood system for parents, providers and children. The proposals are designed to encourage systemic change, promote data sharing, and build skill sets for professionals working with children ages 0-8 years of age. Each proposal can operate independently or can be integrated together. Additional information and budget detail can be provided upon request.

The recommendations below are being presented by the Early Learner South Dakota (ELSD) group. If there are capacity restrictions within the Department we have specifically offered outside ‘Primary Contract’ entities that are willing and able to take on the proposed activities, in collaboration with the state/DSS.

Any primary contract and budget suggestions can be adjusted based on DSS’s review of this document. All topics and suggestions are being offered by ELSD as we see them to help strengthen the foundation of our child care system in SD. Many, if not all, of these suggestions can be used as one time funds with relief dollars.

We also realize that there may be some initiatives already in place that ELSD is not aware of that may be mentioned below.

Proposals for State-Funded Programing

1. ECE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE STUDY

PURPOSE AND GOALS

Prime Contract: South Dakota State University (SDSU)

Collaborators: SDAEYC, DSS, Tribal CCDF Offices, ECE Enrichment System, and SDSU Extension

Purpose: To the greatest extent possible, the SD ECE workforce study will enable state agencies, communities, and others working with the early childhood workforce to better understand the universe of individuals working in childcare (both in centers and in family child care homes).

Goal: The goal is to understand the composition of the child care workforce: gender, race, ethnicity, age, years of experience, level of education (or certifications earned), annual earnings, access to benefits (such as health care coverage and retirement), setting in which individuals work (centers, homes, faith-based, public schools), nonprofit or for profit operating structure, and ages of children with whom individuals work.

Development of the Questionnaire: We will consult with each of the nine Tribal CCDF, via face-to-face or online meeting and the Child Care Association contact, to ensure that the survey questions are appropriate and will provide an opportunity to capture the lived experiences of the workforce.

Recruitment Strategies: The target is to include all regulated child care centers and homes in the state, as well as a sample of unregulated centers and homes. Contact information for regulated centers and homes are available from State Licensing Offices and Early Childhood Enrichment Sites, and all the providers will be invited to participate in the study.

A cover letter explaining the purpose of the study and the link to the online survey will be emailed to the centers and homes. After two weeks, non-respondents will be contacted via phone call and will be invited to participate in a phone interview. We will send a surface mail to providers who do not have email addresses and/or phone numbers, as well as those who did not respond to the online survey after one month. Similarly, the surface mail will include a cover letter and a hard copy of the survey, together with a postage-paid reply envelope. Following best practices in recruitment, we will be sending periodic reminders if necessary, to encourage participation.

To reach unregulated centers and homes which are not on directories, snowball sampling will be employed. We will ask those who have responded to the survey if they can recruit other providers among their acquaintances.

Data Management and Analysis: Survey responses will be entered in a password-protected spreadsheet. We will run descriptive and correlational statistics to provide a good overview of the child care workforce and to make sound assumptions from the survey sample that can be generalized to the child care workforce in the state.

Timeline: We anticipate conducting the study over a period of 18 months.

Months 1 – 3: Consultation with stakeholders, development of data collection measures and recruitment strategies;

Months 4 – 9: Data collection with ongoing data entry

Months 10 – 12: Data management and initial analysis

Months 13 – 15: Data analysis

Months 16 – 18: Write up and presentation of findings

Deliverables:

- Comprehensive report of the study, including methodology, general and county-specific findings, conclusion, and recommendations.
- Executive summary or reviews in brief on the following topics:
 - Overview of the child care workforce in South Dakota, workforce demographic characteristics, work experience, and compensation in child care centers.
 - Description and comparison of child care centers and family child care homes.
 - Tenure and turnover of the child care workforce.
 - Professional development and support available for the child care workforce.

Cost: \$186,825.00 – See breakdown below

Salaries	
GRA 1	\$20,069
GRA 2	\$20,069
Salary 1 - 15%	\$15,678
Salary 2 - 15%	\$19,888
Salary 3 - 15%	\$19,827
Benefits	\$15,084
Stipend for ECE Enrichment Site Liaisons	\$20,000
Total for 18 months	\$130,615
Consultants/Contracts	
Support from Child Care Services Association	\$20,000
Mile Up Marketing - Design Fees	\$12,290
Total Consultants/Contracts	\$32,290
Supplies	
Mailing	\$3,000
Phone Fees	\$2,000
SDAEYC Constant Contact - Email Engine	\$2,500
Total Supplies	\$7,500
Gathering Data Expenses	

Focus Groups with ECE Sites - customizing data sets & questions	\$4,000
Focus Groups with Tribal Education Centers - customizing questions	\$4,000
Travel to Tribal Education Centers - Interviewing	\$8,420
Total Data Gathering Expenses	\$16,420
Total Proposal	\$186,825
MOU for shared information, and shared raw data - sharing data and create briefings	
Outreach to SD Extension liaison(s)	
MOU for Data Access	
MOU for website page - Early Learner, SDSU, ECE Enrichment Sites, DSS, Tribal CCDF Offices	

2. STEP UP TO T.E.A.C.H. PROGRAM

PURPOSE AND GOALS

Prime Contract: SDAEYC OR 1 of the 5 ECE Enrichment office to be the primary contract

Collaborators: All ECE Enrichment Offices, SDAEYC, and DSS

Purpose: The [T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® \(T.E.A.C.H.\) Initiative](#) is a national, evidence-based strategy that creates access to higher education for teachers, directors and family child care providers working with young children in out-of-home settings. T.E.A.C.H. provides comprehensive scholarships to enable these early educators to take coursework leading to credentials and degrees by making it possible for them to afford both the time and expense of going to school. [Step up to T.E.A.C.H.](#) is an opportunity for SD to support the ECE workforce through the American Rescue Plan Act to implement a short-to-long term early childhood workforce stabilization strategy.

Goal: High-quality child care depends on a high-quality workforce with the knowledge and competencies to best promote the healthy development of children. The goal is to strengthen the child care workforce to help individuals interested in obtaining a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential or to access and complete higher education coursework (such as an AA in Early Childhood) to do so. In order to participate in this program, an educator, director, or owner would be required to be a licensed program. This would give incentive to more providers to become licensed with the Department of Social Services.

The national T.E.A.C.H. Program would give the state a consultation period to plan and outline the program fully. The counselors and administrators, listed below, would be the primary contacts to help make this happen. These employees, along with state departments, would help to build a taskforce of higher education providers to look at the way that SD could consider expanding services offered to ECE providers, making it easier for them to obtain higher education degrees.

There are additional courses that care offered in an online platform found here:

<https://www.earlyedualliance.org/about-us/>

Deliverables:

- Allow CDA’s to be made available to any ECE educators, in licensed programs, in SD.
- T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® National Center will engage in a modified process to launch *Step Up to T.E.A.C.H.* in states that have an interest in using designated funding through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) to implement a short-to-long term workforce stabilization strategy.
- The Center works with each state to develop an education/incentive scale, eligibility and policies and then provides ongoing training and technical assistance with the expectation that each state will continue to pursue necessary funding to sustain and grow the program.
- T.E.A.C.H. participation by 70 child care workers throughout SD.
- Counseling and apprenticeship / wrap around services would be offered by T.E.A.C.H. counselor.
- Scholarships will be given the first year.
- Wage incentives would be given the 2nd year, see WAGES\$ proposal below.
- Creation of Higher Education Taskforce to discuss expansion of ECE higher education offerings.
- Encouragement of providers/owners to make an investment in the educator taking on this higher education opportunity. Examples would include a pay raise or annual bonus. Counselors and T.E.A.C.H. would work with providers/owners on this topic.
- Annual report for year 1. Annual report and evaluation for year 2.

Cost:

T.E.A.C.H. (2 year estimate)		
<i>Below are costs of programs available for ECE educators</i>		
Description	Cost	2 Year Cost
CDA Programs (60 students at \$1,225 per student)	\$73,500	\$147,000
AA programs for 10 recipients (\$14,025 per student - 75% of cost)*	\$140,250	\$280,500
<i>*Numbers based on Southeast Tech tuition</i>		
Total	\$213,750	\$427,500
Administrative Costs (based on T.E.A.C.H. Program recommendations)		
Program Administrator	\$125,000	\$250,000
Counseling Specialist	\$115,000	\$230,000
Administrative Assistant	\$100,000	\$200,000
Supplies	\$30,000	\$60,000
T.E.A.C.H. Program Planning Consultant	\$30,000	\$60,000
Stipends to programs/owners to cover substitutes for T.E.A.C.H. scholarship holder	\$77,000	\$154,000
Total	\$477,000	\$954,000
Marketing and Material Cost		
	\$25,000	\$50,000
Total Cost	\$715,750	\$1,431,500

3. CHILD CARE WAGES\$ PROGRAM

PURPOSE AND GOALS

The median wage for child care workers in 2020 was \$10.39. A stable child care system depends on a stable child care workforce. Our overall recommendation is to increase wages for child care workers in

order to more fairly compensate workers for their essential care to children and improve retention in the workforce. It is important that solutions to increase child care worker wages go directly to educators in the early learning field to see maximum benefit. One way to accomplish the goal of increased wages is through a nationally recognized program called Step Up to Wage\$ Program, described below. We are open to brainstorming other strategies that can help increase worker pay and stabilize the child care workforce

Purpose: The Child Care WAGE\$® Program is a nationally recognized compensation strategy for the early care and education workforce. The Child Care Services Association (CCSA) in North Carolina created and implements the program in the state. In addition, other states have licensed the model through CCSA’s T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® National Center (Center). The Child Care WAGE\$ Program provides education-based salary supplements or incentives based on six-month periods worked in the same child care program with the goals of increasing compensation, education and retention. These and other important benefits have been achieved throughout the program’s history.

The traditional Child Care WAGE\$ Program license identifies multiple expectations to help ensure the quality of the program in each participating state, including various levels of monitoring and assessment. The goal would be to implement this program simultaneously with the Step Up to T.E.A.C.H. Program but can be implemented without. If it was implemented without the T.E.A.C.H. Program the cost projections for the administrators would increase.

Goals:

- To recruit Early Learning professionals to the field in SD.
- Retain Early Childhood workforce in SD.
- Support providers to ensure increased wages or benefits to not in turn increase parent pay.
- Primary incentive to participate in the T.E.A.C.H. Program.
- Give funds to providers/owners that participate in the T.E.A.C.H. Program, funds to give wage-based incentives to employees for participating in continuing education.
- A Child Care WAGE\$ recipient would have to remain employed at the same location for more than 6 months in order to qualify for the WAGE\$ Program stipend.

Deliverables:

- Programs that become involved in this program would be able to incentivize employees that would be going through the T.E.A.C.H. Program or employees that have already obtained a higher education degree of some kind.
- Incentives would be given to the providers from the prime coordinator for the WAGE\$ Program.
- The prime contractor would work with the Early Childhood® National Center in order to establish the outline and all aspects of the WAGE\$ Program.

Cost:

WAGE\$ (2 year estimate)		
<i>Below are costs of programs available for ECE educators</i>		
Description of Annual Incentive Costs	Costs	Total for 2 years
WAGE\$ Program cost given per CDA Student - 60 students (annual incentive)	\$450	\$54,000
WAGE\$ Program cost given per AA Student - 20 (annual incentive)	\$1,000	\$40,000

WAGE\$ Program cost given per BA graduate - 10 (annual incentive)	\$2,000	\$40,000
WAGE\$ Program cost given per Masters level graduate - 5 (annual incentive)	\$5,000	\$50,000
Cost estimated based on 10 AA students and 60 CDA		\$184,000
Administrative Costs (Admin costs would need to increase if T.E.A.C.H. not funded)		
Program Administrator	\$30,000	\$60,000
Administrative Assistant	\$15,000	\$30,000
<i>Total</i>		\$90,000
Marketing and Material Cost	\$15,000	\$30,000
Total Cost		\$304,000

4. VOLUNTARY REGISTRATION LIST

PURPOSE AND GOALS

Prime Contract: 211 Helpline

Collaborators: United Way of Black Hills, SDAEYC, Enrichment Offices, and SD Statewide Family Engagement Center

Purpose: Currently, more than 2,000 unregistered home-based child care providers are regularly caring for children whose parents pay for their services. These home-based providers are not voluntarily registered or licensed. The intent is to create lists of “underground” family child care providers in each Enrichment Office service area.

Goal: The goal is to know where these 2,000 home-based providers are located in South Dakota. With lists, it would be possible to send them information about health and safety, early childhood development, and other resources to help them support healthy child development. A secondary goal would be to educate them about voluntary DSS regulation and to support their interest in becoming voluntarily registered, if they wished to do so. To encourage participation in regional lists, each provider would be offered a \$250 gift card to purchase materials for their program.

211 has recently created a system in which parents can call about the availability of childcare, receive valuable wrap-around feedback, resource connections, and be made aware of the options in their area. Having 211 Helpline hold, and help grow, the list of unregulated providers would exponentially help their already monumental goals.

Deliverables:

- Regional lists of unregistered home-based providers to be held with 211 Helpline.
- Monthly newsletters containing resources for all providers.
- Each provider, receiving the incentive, would have some stipulations of upkeep that they would have to agree upon in order to receive funds, this would be decided by the prime contractor of these funds.
- Reports and data to be held with 211 Helpline.

- The 211 Helpline to be the prime contract with FTE and SDAEYC .5 FTE in order to help be the liaison with economic development and city/county level elected officials.
- Establishing inclusion and exclusion guidelines for when a provider may or may not be listed on the list.
- Establishing how the list will be used and providers will be contacted.

Cost: A Coordinator 211 Helpline .5 FTE (or agreed upon participation level) in each Enrichment Office. Outreach materials would be developed by the coordinator and shared across Enrichment Offices for dissemination.

Voluntary Registry list	
Cost over the course of 2 years	
Description	Cost
211 Helpline FTE - Coordinator	\$65,000
ECE Enrichment Office Liaison	\$200,000
<i>Amounts of funds will be dispersed based on region size</i>	
SDAEYC Partner and Liaison	\$40,000
Provider Incentives (Stipend or Gift card)	\$500,000
<i>Estimate of 2,000 providers @ \$250 per provider</i>	
Marketing Costs and Materials	\$100,000
Total Estimated Cost	\$905,000

5. SOUTH DAKOTA STATEWIDE ECE ENRICHMENT OFFICE SHARED ONLINE PLATFORM

PURPOSE AND GOALS

Prime Contract: Black Hills Special Services, SDAEYC, and ECE Enrichment Offices

Collaborators: United Way of Black Hills, SDAEYC, and ECE Enrichment Offices

Purpose: More than 30 states have an online statewide platform of 2,000+ resources for child care providers (center-based and home-based). The platform can be customized for specific SD information and comes pre-loaded with information related to business resources, health and safety, child development materials, and many editable templates that can be immediately used by providers (e.g., basic business templates for recordkeeping, cash-flow statements, parent handbooks, sample policies and contracts, etc.). The platform also includes an online family child care toolkit – a go-to clearinghouse of materials to support home-based providers. The purpose is to support child care providers with 24/7 access to resources that they can learn from or edit and use so that each provider does not have to recreate the wheel. It’s a way for child care providers to save time and money with easy access to the materials they need. [The ECE Shared Resources site](#) is maintained by CCA Global for Social Good. Early Learner SD has a pricing form that they would be happy to share for more details.

Another component of the statewide platform is Acquire for Hire, a jobs posting area for child care centers to help expedite and manage the staff hiring process. Particularly today with the difficulty providers are having in hiring staff, this component has been helpful to center directors to post jobs and manage hiring.

Goal: The ECE shared resources site is often called “child care in a box” by its users since there are so many resources that are helpful to those operating child care programs that are not part of a national chain that have their own franchise system manual of operations and guides. The goal is to provide access to this resource for SD’s child care providers – child care centers and family child care homes. It is not just a resource site, but providers can also obtain discounts on many frequently purchased products in child care programs. Discounts are negotiated nationally so that all 30+ states hosting a site can offer such benefits to providers within their state.

Deliverables:

- Annual reports that summarize the number of users, the number of page views, the most frequently downloaded items, and other metrics that may be helpful to understand what child care providers most need and want.
- Summary of SD state modifications made to the site to link to SD specific resources that will be helpful to providers. (Access to the platform could also be helpful in encouraging unregulated providers to join their regional lists)!
- Data analytics and feedback options are made readily available to the users of this platform to better direct services and training to providers and parents.

COST:

SD Statewide ECE Shared Resources Online Platform	
Cost over the course of 2 years	
Description	Cost
SDAEYC / ECE Enrichment FTE - Coordinator	\$65,000
BHSSC Coordinator (.5 FTE, includes 29% benefits & occupancy for salary range of \$50-60,000)	\$ 40,000
BHSSC Media Services	\$16,250
<i>Platform development & integration with current websites, updates, maintenance, etc. (\$650/day * 20 days in Year 1, 5 days in Year 2)</i>	
Platform Purchase (\$50,000) & 2-year annual fees (\$26,250/year)	\$102,500
Total Estimated Cost	\$ 223,750

6. SOUTH DAKOTA UPDATED STATEWIDE DATA SYSTEM

PURPOSE AND GOALS

Prime Contract: SD DSS

Collaborators: United Way of Black Hills, Benchmark Data Labs, SD Kids Count, 211 Helpline, and ECE Enrichment Offices

Purpose: Many states are considering updating data systems with American Rescue Plan stabilization funds (through the 10% state administrative portion of the funding). The intent would be to update the capacity of the data system to retain records that include: basic location and business information related to each provider with licensing capacity; capacity by age of the child and provider type (all options from which parents could choose for their young children such as licensed or registered child care, Head Start, part or full day preschool, faith-based care, etc.); and information on current openings. The purpose of an updated data system is to better understand supply and demand within the child care system. More readily available data can inform strategies to address supply shortages so parents ultimately have the information needed to choose the type of care that works for them.

Goal: By developing a comprehensive database on child care and early learning settings in the state, policymakers and communities can better identify supply gaps and design strategies to support parents who need child care in order to work. Additionally, by collecting information on current openings, parents can more easily find child care openings within the state. For example, [Legup](#) is an enrollment software program that providers, communities, or states can use to provide real-time enrollment information in child care programs. A more comprehensive database that collects similar features will help streamline collecting information from child care providers and then sharing that information with parents and communities.

Owner/Manager. This type of data system would be developed and maintained by the South Dakota Department of Social Services. United Way of Black Hills, Benchmark Data Labs, SD Kids Count, 211 Helpline, and Enrichment Offices can help support this type of data management system.

****NOTE:** We see that if the registry list was also held with 211 Helpline that this may be a natural fit to if and when providers may have a system in which they can all help to track their child care information on. If 211 Helpline were to host the voluntary registry list of unregulated providers, then this could be yet another layer of information that could be beneficial to this database.

****Secondary Intentions with this project****

Purpose: Current service organizations and state agencies are providing valuable, but independent, aid and resources for children and families in South Dakota. Integrated and linked data sets across multiple governmental and non-governmental agencies will undoubtedly translate to better system engagement, coordinated care, and improved resources for children and families in need. South Dakota requires a comprehensive planning effort around the feasibility of an integrated database system managed by a single-point data agency that can effectively provide holistic views of a child's welfare and safety, ultimately predicting indicators associated with both adversity and health throughout the lifespan. The data system will help close the service gap naturally created by the rural nature of our state, and help professionals assess areas of need. The result of coordinated and complementing data sets allows for policymakers, community members, and response agencies to better plan and adapt impactful ways to

assist families. Major deliverables include a gap analysis, a state strategic plan, and proposed implementation strategy.

Goal: Create a state-wide strategic plan and implementation strategy to evaluate information collection and sharing between state agencies (e.g. child care licensing, Medicaid or other public benefits, child protection services, etc.). Develop a gap analysis for data surrounding social determinants of health, including agreed upon risk and protective factors for children and families. Propose an implementation strategy for aligning data efforts – including collection and reporting – state-wide. Explore the potential of a single-point data agency and make recommendations for creation, funding, and sustainability of the integrated data system.

Owner/ Manager: The gap analysis and state strategic planning should complement, and supplement work being performed by the Center for the Prevention of Child Maltreatment, in partnership with the SD Departments of Education and Health. The owner of a potential single-point data agency will be determined from the gap analysis and recommendations from strategic planning.

7. MARKETING CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE AND OTHER DEPARTMENT OFFERINGS

PURPOSE AND GOALS

Prime Contract: Early Learner SD / Department of Social Services

Collaborators: United Way of Black Hills, SDAEYC, Enrichment Offices

During the state plan presentation, many questions from the state were asked about how to better communicate with families and providers. ELSD has run statewide campaigns and several stakeholders have worked on statewide marketing campaigns. Having an outside firm help with marketing of this vital need in SD would be extremely beneficial.

Purpose: A key purpose of the Child Care and Development Block Grant of 2014 is to increase the number and percentage of low income children in high quality child care. Part of achieving this objective is to ensure that parents are educated consumers. A marketing campaign related to increasing the visibility of help to find child care and/or help to afford child care will help increase the likelihood that parents will make the best decisions possible for child care arrangements for their children.

Goal: To increase consumer education to help parents find child care, know what key questions to ask, and if they need financial help to afford child care, that help is available. The goal would also be to increase the awareness and offerings of DSS and the ECE Enrichment offices of SD.

Deliverables:

- RFP to be sent out to SD marketing firms.
- Small group of invested stakeholders to review and approve designs made by the RFP recipient.
- 6-12 month deadline for statewide promotion.
- Marketing plan to raise visibility about the importance of high-quality child care to a child's early brain development, how to find child care, key questions to ask, and who to contact for financial help to afford child care.

- Designs to be shared on billboards, bus wraps, social media, and other communication modes to reach a broad array of parents to enable them to become educated consumers.
- Co-marketing with Child Care Helpline through 211 Helpline.
- Co-marketing with any other child care resource providers, etc.

Cost: \$200,000 budget written into RFP

8. REIMBURSEMENT BASED ON ENROLLMENT NOT ON HOURS ATTENDED FOR 2021-2024

PURPOSE AND GOALS

Prime Contact: Department of Social Services

It is our recommendation that child care assistance dollars be reimbursed to providers based on enrollment, rather than hours attended from now until January 2024.

Purpose: To provide a steady stream of revenue for providers serving low income children whose care is paid for with a child care subsidy, provider payments will be made based on enrollment not attendance – aligned with the same payment processes used by private-pay parents.

Goal: The goal is to increase the number of providers who are willing to serve children whose care is paid for with a subsidy and to provide a steady revenue stream of payments for such providers. The reality is that whether a child is absent or not, staff need to be paid, fixed costs need to be met, and therefore, the goal is to ensure that child care programs are funded in a way that supports their ongoing costs.