

Early Learning Advisory Committee (ELAC)

Meeting Minutes

October 31, 2013

Present: Kevin Bain, Chairman
Alonzo Weems
Tammy Veselsky
Charlie Geier
Beckie Minglin
Connie Sherman
John Burnett
Melanie Brizzi (by phone)

Guests:
Amanda Lopez

Absent: n/a

Next meeting: December 4, 2013
1 to 3 p.m.
Indiana Government Center South Conference Center

I. Announcements

This was the ELAC's first meeting. The goal of the meeting was to review the draft Early Education Matching Grant (EEMG) recommendations and time table. The objective for the next meeting (December 4) will be to vote on the EEMG recommendations and move forward with other committee responsibilities.

II. Discussion

Amanda Lopez from Transform Consulting Group presented the EEMG draft recommendations. She is the chair of the EEMG work group that developed the recommendations.

EEMG background information-

Statute and purpose- the EEMG is in statute IC 12-17.2-3.7. It is a 2 million dollar pilot program available for two years. The funds do not revert. The purpose of the grant is to increase the number of slots available for low-income¹ four year olds in high-quality early care and education programs. The goal is to supplement and not to supplant by enrolling children who are not currently enrolled in high-quality care. The applicants must be at Level 3 or Level 4 of Paths to QUALITY; must be an entity and not an individual²; must agree to use the ISTAR-KR assessment; and demonstrate a cash match.

¹ Below 100 percent of the federal poverty level

² Per the statute language, a grant cannot be awarded to an individual.

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Administration- the EEMG will be administered by the Division of Family Resources (“the division”) within the Indiana Family and Social Services Administration (FSSA). The division will develop the application process, administer the grant, monitor compliance of grantee(s), and monitor educational outcomes.

Need- the ELAC was shown maps and figures demonstrating the need³ for this grant program as well as the capacity within and availability of early care and education programs⁴. As of October 31, 2013, child care centers at Levels 3 and 4 of Paths to QUALITY have a 9 percent capacity (1,600 slots).

Recommendations for the EEMG application (RFF)

Recommendations for the EEMG application were put together by the EEMG work group, a multi-disciplinary group of early education professionals with no direct conflict of interest with the grant program. The group met three times to put together the recommendations presented to the ELAC. The proposed grant application is a Request for Funds (RFF) that includes

- Mandatory requirements (pass/fail)
- Need- 20 points
- Program Design- 40 points
- Organizational Capacity- 30 points
- A budget- 10 points
- Competitive preference priorities- extra 5 points (1 point for each priority)

Need- section would have a narrative component requiring the applicant to demonstrate the need for additional slots for low-income four year olds. The score would be weighted based on the demonstrated need and the availability of care in that area.

Program Design- section would require discussion of outcomes (school-readiness); curriculum; screening and assessment; and plans for targeted populations and recruitment. There would be no minimum or maximum required regarding the number of new children that the applicant proposes to serve. Consensus was reached on the fact that there will be no obligation to fund the total number proposed by any one provider, and the Division can determine to fund a provider but at a lesser number than what the provider proposed. Family engagement is embedded into each piece of the application- it is not an add-on. Grantees would not need to already be using the ISTAR-KR assessment but would need to make a commitment to use it.

Organizational capacity- this section is needed to determine the credibility of the organization; would require applicant to explain the organizational history; organizational structure; professional development plan; EEMG project plan; financial stability and controls; and a sustainability plan. An additional proposed component of this is the requirement that the lead teacher have a minimum of a Bachelor’s degree in Early Childhood Education and that the assistant teacher have a minimum of a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential. The wages component was considered in that reviewers will be looking at the professional development plan for a correlation

³ See map- Number of Hoosier Children ages 0-5 Below Poverty

⁴ See maps- Paths to QUALITY Level 4 Child Care Providers by Capacity and Number of Providers // Paths to QUALITY Level 3 Child Care Providers by Capacity and Number of Providers

between increased professional development and increased salary, but the proposed application does not include a requirement for increased salaries.

Budget- section would include a budget table; narrative justification; and match commitment letters. Recommended \$6,700 scholarship for each child to be served. It is estimated that the EEMG will serve 500 annually (1,000 total). A 1:1 cash match required- no in-kind will be considered in the match.⁵ The funds would be dispersed through an agreement between the grantee and FSSA. The grantee would submit claims after costs are incurred and would be reimbursed within 90 days. The cash match will provide the float. A binding letter would be required for the match commitment. The EEMG money is intended exclusively for the specific costs associated with serving additional children- it is not intended for capacity building or quality development, but the matching funds do not have the same restrictions and could be used in those capacities.

Competitive preference priorities- competitive preference priorities will be worth 1 point each for a maximum total of 5 additional points.

1. History of school readiness outcomes
2. Experience using child assessments such as the ISTAR-KR
3. Established relationship with local school corporation(s)
4. Experience with low-income family engagement
5. Combined community match

Proposed Timeline for Activities

Actions	Time Needed	Estimated Timeline
Stakeholder Feedback	30 Days	Nov. 30, 2013
ELAC Approval of RFF	1 Day	Dec. 4, 2013
Finalize the RFF	2 Weeks	Dec. 18, 2013
Release RFF	1 Day	Dec. 20, 2013
Provide Info Sessions / Response Time	60 Days	Feb. 21, 2014
Score the Applications	3 Weeks	March 14, 2014
Select Grantees / ELAC Approval	2 Weeks	March 31, 2014
Announce Awards	1 Day	April 1, 2014
Execute Grant Agreements	60 – 90 Days	June – July 2014

⁵ The rationale for not considering in-kind match is that it establishes the public-private partnership aspect and provides for more children to be served in the pilot, as well as starting to model a path forward for sustainability of efforts. It was also noted that monitoring in-kind contributions would be difficult for the Division.

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The ELAC will share the one-page EEMG summary with constituents to achieve the proposed goal of gathering stakeholder feedback by Nov. 30.

ELAC considerations and recommendations for the EEMG

Feedback was provided regarding the recommended EEMG program and application. The ELAC recommends that the EEMG work group meet again prior to December 4 to incorporate ELAC recommendations into the RFF.

A question was raised about the intended reviewers of the submitted RFFs- Amanda explained that the following controls will be in place to ensure objective assessment and awarding of funds:

- The review process will be voluntary- reviewers will not be paid for their services
- The review process will be a team review process to establish checks and balances and ensure that the awarding of funds is not determined by a single individual
- The reviewers will have no direct conflict of interest

The ELAC is supportive of regional considerations within the application review process to ensure a geographically broad distribution of funds. The committee recommends that the RFF include a set minimum of how many children must be included in each region and establish score cut-offs and targets for each region. The difference in scores for those awarded will need to be spelled out up-front.

A question was raised about whether \$6,700 per additional child served was enough incentive to elicit quality responses. Connie Sherman (St. Mary's Child Center) responded that \$6,700 is a substantial amount to elicit quality responses, but many early care and education programs might lack the infrastructure components needed for grant writing and fund development. The ELAC recommends identifying resources for disadvantaged grant writers, including but not limited to the free grant review service offered through the Indiana Youth Institute (IYI). The ELAC recommends including such resources in the grant application and EEMG information session.

The ELAC also discussed EEMG funding strategy. The ELAC first wants to confirm that the funds will not revert. Assuming that we can keep the funds, then the Committee suggested that we consider "front loading" the program the first year and fund 1,000 slots instead of 500. This way, the report that we will share about the impact of the program will involve a greater number of children.

The Committee did agree, however, that it will depend on the proposals and if there are enough slots/children proposed to serve. They also said it will depend on the capacity of BCC to manage this increase.

The first step was to determine if the funds will revert or not. All agree that we don't want to return unspent funds.

ELAC responsibilities

The committee discussed two of its additional responsibilities beyond the EEMG, conducting a periodic needs assessment and the capacity for higher education to support ECE professionals.

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1. Conducting a periodic needs assessment – the ELAC agreed that the first step in conducting a needs assessment is to establish a baseline by conducting an environmental scan of current initiatives. A question was raised about where this information can be obtained. Dianna Wallace from Indiana Association for the Education of Young Children volunteered to send some information, and Charlie Geier, ELAC member from IDOE, will send out the Education Roundtable data to the committee.
2. Capacity for higher education to support professionals – this has two parts: degrees/credentials and continued professional development for early education professionals. Dianna Wallace shared information about articulation agreements in Indiana and will send this information to the ELAC.

Other

Charlie Geier shared information about Indiana's Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge Grant application that was submitted in October. The grant was written by FSSA, IDOE, and the Indiana State Department of Health. Should Indiana not receive the funding, the application still represents a viable strategic blueprint that was put together through effective collaboration. The ELAC requested a copy of the narrative that was submitted.

The ELAC discussed how to communicate its work to the public and decided that information should be posted online on the FSSA website. the Bureau of Child Care can coordinate the development of this web page.

The ELAC agreed that they should meet every 6 weeks and then at some point transition to quarterly meetings.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:30 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for December 4 from 1-3 in IGCS