Georgia Preschool Development Grant Birth Through Five (PDG B-5)
Renewal Grant Application
HHS-2019-ACF-OCC-TP-1567

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Project Summary/Abstract

Project Title: Maximizing Access to High-Quality for Vulnerable Children B-5 in Georgia
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Georgia has a unified early childhood care and education (ECCE) agency, universal mixed delivery prekindergarten program, and an approach to raising quality for all program settings – but has more to do to reach all children, particularly the children who would benefit most from high quality ECCE. In 2019 Georgia's PDG showed the state where it has gaps for families, especially for focal populations and rural communities, to navigate the system and access services. The state formed a Cross Agency Child Council (CACC) with leadership from all child- and family-serving programs to oversee Georgia's PDG B-5 strategies and address this issue. In its renewal grant, Georgia proposes to:

- *Strengthen Family Voice & Make Systems More Accessible.* Georgia will embed family voices at all levels of ECCE governance, from the CACC to communities. Through a variety of projects, Georgia will provide multiple opportunities to strengthen family voice, support families in understanding child development and connect them to critical services (such as IDEA), and connect families to community services through strengthening partnerships and transitions.
- *Facilitate Career Pathways & Build Workforce Capacity.* Georgia will update standards, create professional development, and financial incentives to align and support career pathways for teachers, administrators, trainers and technical assistance (TA) providers. It will focus on supporting bilingual educators and family child care providers, with an eye toward improving recruitment and retention in rural areas. Georgia will study how to revamp the scholarship and bonus awards program to ensure equitable distribution of qualified teachers for focal populations.
- *Expand Reach & Effectiveness of Quality Rated Statewide and Innovate to Reach Under-Served.* Georgia proposes to use the quality rating and improvement system (QRIS) as a stronger lever for improving access to quality among focal populations. The state will bring all publicly supported programs serving children in low-income working families into the QRIS; revise QRIS to reflect current research and practice for the first time since 2011; add a language and literacy endorsement to the QRIS; and upgrade training and support for providers. The state will also pilot staffed family child care networks to reach infants and toddlers in under-served areas, and give community grants to enable local solutions to improve quality for focal populations and rural areas.
- *Make Integrated Data Accessible & Use to Ensure Accountability and Quality.* Georgia will update a robust early childhood integrated data system, add elements, and improve user experience so that data can inform research and decisions at the state and local levels. The state will continue to evaluate performance across agencies, with new capacity once all publicly funded ECCE programs are in the QRIS system by the end of 2020.

Expected Outcomes

Georgia proposes to continue and create projects to meet the following Preschool Development Grants (PDG) B-5 goals: 1) raise quality of early child care and education (ECCE) programs; 2) increase access to ECCE programs for focal populations, including the ECCE workforce; and 3) align resources and increase coordination across programs and agencies that serve children and families. Georgia has a strong ECCE system for all children and families. To ensure access, the state proposes PDG B-5 activities addressing the needs of focal groups of children and families (see Activity 1). Proposed activities will also build understanding of gaps that exist in the current mixed delivery system, especially for children from vulnerable and underserved populations. Throughout the proposal, Georgia builds in evaluation activities to measure progress towards meeting the goals.

The expected outcomes are: 1) an increase in higher quality programs measured by number of programs rated; 2) an increase in the % of focal populations with access to higher quality programs; 3) an increase in the knowledge and competency of the workforce; 4) increased family voice; and 5) better coordination and alignment between child serving agencies and programs.

Organizational Capacity and Management

Georgia's PDG B-5 and the state ECCE system is solidly anchored in Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL). Georgia is one of the few states in the country with a separate, legislatively created ECCE state-level department devoted to programs and services for children birth through five, their families, and the professionals who serve them. DECAL manages the following federal and state programs: Georgia's Pre-K Program, Head Start State Collaboration Office, Quality Rated (QR) (Georgia's Tiered QRIS), child care licensing, the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF), subsidized child care

(Childcare and Parent Services [CAPS] program), the Child Care Resource and Referral agencies (CCR&Rs), and federal nutrition programs.

DECAL is led by a Commissioner appointed by and reporting directly to the Governor, underscoring the importance of children's early learning and development to executive leadership. DECAL is supported by an advisory board, composed of one representative from each of Georgia's 14 congressional districts appointed by the Governor. The board meets at least four times per year and advises the work of the department.

DECAL administers a budget composed of federal, state, and philanthropic funding with no audit findings for over 10 years. In fiscal year 2020, DECAL's budget is $835 million. DECAL has experience managing state and federal level grants including a Race to the Top- Early Learning Challenge Grant (ELC) of $2 million from 2013-2018, an Early Head Start – Child Care Partnership Grant (EHS-CCP) of $29 million from 2015-2020, and federal USDA nutrition grants of $850 million from 2015-2020. In addition, the department oversees a $378 million budget of state lottery revenue annually dedicated to the Georgia Pre-K program.

DECAL is part of the Georgia Children's Cabinet, created in 2012. The Cabinet functions as the State Advisory Council for the purposes of federal Head Start rules and reviews ongoing systemic work to improve ECCE in its bi-monthly meetings. In 2019, Governor Brian Kemp appointed as co-chairs: DECAL Commissioner, Amy Jacobs and Executive Director of the Governor's Office of Student Achievement, Joy Hawkins.

Activity One: B-5 Statewide Needs Assessment Plan

1. Status of the Statewide B-5 Needs Assessment

DECAL has built on existing research and data collection to identify needs and gaps through its PDG Needs Assessment (NA) process. Georgia PDG B-5 leaders have: 1) gathered and

synthesized data and research related to the PDG B-5 NA Domains and Key Questions; 2) met with and surveyed various ECCE stakeholder groups about the data and research gaps, strengths and challenges of Georgia's system, and identified additional opportunities for collaboration; 3) created two subcommittees to address specific domains and overall needs of Georgia's system; 4) created and distributed the NA survey; and 5) compiled all these pieces and began analysis. A summary chart of the process and key activities follows.

Steps	Process Used
Stakeholder Identification Winter 2019	Identified key stakeholders including the Children's Cabinet, cross state agency leadership, advocacy groups, providers, provider groups, and family voice.
Contract Procurement Spring 2019	Contracted with Child Trends for planning, research, and data support. Contracted with the Carl Vinson Institute of Government (CVIOG) at the University of Georgia for planning, survey development, distribution, analysis, meeting facilitation, and logistical support.
Gathering Existing Data and Resources Summer 2019	Conducted a Data Inventory with partner state agencies and cultivated data sharing from existing data and research work in order to be efficient in the need assessment, including the Department of Public Health (DPH) home visiting needs assessment, research on child care subsidy, collected by a Longitudinal Study of Children Who Attended Georgia's Pre-K Program, and the Get Georgia Reading campaign.
Stakeholder Surveys Fall 2019	Surveyed child-serving organizations about their data collection and use; surveyed stakeholders about strengths, challenges, opportunities, and their desired focus for Strategic Planning.
Face-to-Face Engagement and Feedback Loops Fall 2019	Assembled over 50 stakeholders for an all-day meeting of the NA subgroup on October 17. Georgia's six CCR&Rs weighed in on TA and training needs on October 24. The Data Needs Subcommittee has made recommendations based on survey data.
Family Focus Groups Fall 2019	Family Ambassadors (described in Activity 3) have been holding family focus groups across the state to discuss Georgia's ECCE system to learn more about families' needs, barriers to access, and perceptions of quality of services.
Community Information Sessions Winter 2019-20	DECAL will host Community Information Sessions in six regions across the state. These sessions will highlight the overall findings from the NA and discuss next steps with the Strategic Plan. This will help the state finalize the NA and begin the strategic planning process.

Findings and Data Gaps: Big-Picture Conclusions. While the NA is not yet finalized, the state has begun identifying and summarizing conclusions and gaps. A key takeaway is that Georgia's

ECCE system has been intentionally built and marketed as being for "all children," which has led to a socio-economically diverse "buy-in" on ECCE issues. But the NA showed gaps in connecting ECCE to other services, which calls for alignment and purposeful coordination among state agencies. In addition, it showed a need for increased mental health and social emotional supports; more supports and resources at the family level, specifically knowledge of child development, navigating the system, and building family resiliency; efforts to increase access to quality child care and early intervention in under-resourced and rural communities; more focus at the state and local level for data literacy, visualization, and collection; and continued tracking and analysis on access to higher quality ECCE environments and supports, especially for children and families from focal populations (defined below.) Needs for the ECCE workforce include better access to workforce credentials and retention, supporting program administrators' knowledge of child development and leadership skills, and more relationship-based learning opportunities.

On November 13, a large stakeholder group meeting will be held to review the draft conclusions from the NA and provide additional recommendations. In addition, PDG B-5 staff and contractors have been compiling results related to each domain outlined in the PDG B-5 NA Guidance, with preliminary responses included in the following table:

Domain	**Preliminary Response**
Definitions	Working definitions include the following terms: quality ECCE, availability, access, vulnerable or underserved, and children in rural areas. The definitions are drawn from Georgia's initial PDG B-5 application and will be included in the final NA.
Underserved focal populations	Georgia's PDG work has defined the following as focal populations: children with disabilities, children in foster care, children in poverty, children experiencing homelessness, children living in rural areas, infants and toddlers, and dual language learners. Additional populations mentioned in the NA include children experiencing food insecurity or inadequate nutrition and children in need of care outside of school hours. The state has working

Domain	Preliminary Response
	definitions of each of these terms that will be adopted in the final NA. Projects in this application specifically address these focal populations.
Quality & availability of ECCE	On October 17th, DECAL hosted an all-day stakeholder engagement meeting focused on key domains and reviewing current research and program data on QR, CAPS, Georgia's Pre-K, the early learning workforce, and Home Visiting. In addition to commissioned research, the state is analyzing administrative data related to availability and quality. Conclusions from all of this data analysis will be highlighted in the final NA.
Unduplicated count data on children served or awaiting service	As part of Georgia's ELC work, the state expanded and operationalized a robust Cross-Agency Child Data System (CACDS). At both state and local levels, CACDS enables unduplicated counts of children participating in key ECCE programs such as Head Start, Early Head Start, Georgia's Pre-K, IDEA Parts B and C, and DECAL's Summer Transition Programs. The NA has highlighted some CACDS data quality and reporting issues, and in Activity 6, Georgia proposes to address them through work to better understand the needs of children and families awaiting services and related available data
Quality & availability of programs & supports	Preliminary findings include the need for improved access to mental health and behavioral support; the need for increased workforce capacity to meet the needs of children with disabilities and dual language learners; and additional resources for families who are not fluent in English. DECAL cross-walked these findings with strategic planning from other state agencies which identified gaps in services, such as the DPH and the Department of Human Services (DHS). The state will include more detailed findings in the final NA.
Data & research gaps	A number of data gaps have been identified, including the need to include more family voices, gaps in measuring services and supports provided to focal populations, and a lack of data integration with Head Start and special education. Additionally, the state is invested in better understanding the needs of working families and two-generation programs and is collecting and analyzing data on meeting those needs. The final report will include a summary of these gaps, along with strategies for addressing them.
Measurable indicators of progress	The NA Data Subcommittee gathered existing measurable indicators of progress currently used by ECCE programs, which will be used to create a shared set of indicators during the strategic planning process.
ECCE facility issues	Georgia tracks the status of child care facilities through licensing services and QR. A review of licensing data found a heightened pattern of citations related to playground safety rules. Some of the citations reflect repeated rule violations by providers who were unable to make necessary corrections. In 2020, DECAL will gather and analyze further data on this problem, update training for licensing consultants, and develop a series of community-based training sessions to be offered throughout the state. Licensed Head Start and Early Head Start facilities have different challenges: outdated fire sprinkler systems and lack of plumbing for adequate toileting and hygiene. The final NA report will address these challenges.

Domain	Preliminary Response
Barriers to funding & provision of ECCE & supports	The NA has identified the need for cross-agency collaboration to improve the alignment of funding and supports. Although the state's interagency data infrastructure is strong, there are challenges with consistency across agencies, and resolving those challenges could help the agencies better coordinate services. The final NA will contain detailed recommendations on this issue.
Transition supports & gaps	The NA shows that transitions within ECCE programs and into kindergarten are especially challenging for children and families within focal populations because they often have to navigate multiple transitions in multiple programs. Also, NA results show data gaps for children who are ineligible for programs or not served by programs for which they are eligible. CACDS is an underused resource both at the state and community level, and Georgia will develop more user-friendly data reports and train stakeholders to use the system and understand data gaps around transitions. In Activity 3, Georgia proposes a landscape analysis of the system to better understand how families navigate and experience ECCE programs and services.
System integration and interagency collaboration	Policies and programs that support collaboration include the Children's Cabinet, CACC, Interagency Coordinating Council, and the Essentials for Childhood Initiative. The state has succeeded in supporting "two generation" (parent- and child-focused together) grants. The Cross-Agency Child Data System (CACDS) is a significant collaboration between state agencies to align child-level data. Additionally, the integrated eligibility system is a chance to align child care with TANF and SNAP.

Plans for Future Needs Assessment Updates and Addressing Data Gaps. DECAL intends to leverage its data system to continue updating the NA and is committed to addressing identified data gaps. The project proposed in Activity 6 focuses on CACDS revisions and will support on-going Needs Assessments updates. Beginning July 1, 2022, Georgia will begin stakeholder engagement to review and revise the NA, as DECAL plans to do every three years going forward. This includes the same steps utilized in developing the current NA: 1) stakeholder survey; 2) data meetings; and 3) overall ECCE community meetings.

Activity 6 details Georgia's plan to update CACDS, and one of the major goals will be to ensure that it can support future changes to the NA. The development of "CACDS 2.0" will allow the generation of reports that can be tailored at the county, zip code, and census tract level, corresponding directly to the NA. The CACDS Research Committee will regularly revisit the

NA findings. It is estimated that these reports and resources for ongoing maintenance will be finalized in the first quarter of 2021 and will go live by May 1, 2021.

Georgia will expand research and data collection related to families, including through the Family Ambassador program (Activity 3) and conducting focus groups about Georgia's integrated eligibility system (Bonus Points: Coordinated Application). The perspectives of families are incorporated throughout the NA. The Family Ambassadors (Activity 3) participated in focus groups and will be part of the large stakeholder group meeting on November 13th to review and provide recommendations regarding the NA findings. Families are represented on both DECAL's Advisory Committee and the CACC (described below) as well as many additional program advisory activities (described in Activity 3). The Strategic Plan will include specific goals related to incorporating family voices in the implementation of the plan, and Georgia will expand research and evaluation activities to better incorporate family perspective, such as in the 2019 *Report on Georgia's Pre-K Enrollment.*[1] The state will create goals related to expanding this type of research beyond Georgia's Pre-K.

2. Plan for Completion

DECAL, Child Trends, and CVIOG are currently synthesizing the gathered information into "big picture" themes and key findings for each domain. These will be shared at the November 13th stakeholder meeting, after which the writers will address initial stakeholder feedback by November 30th. Community Information Sessions will be held in early December to review the results and incorporate any final recommendations. During this time, the findings will also be reviewed by the Children's Cabinet. A final document will be completed and submitted to the Administration for Children and Families by December 31, 2019.

[1] Moore, M.W., Simmons, B., & Wright, T.A. (2019). *Report on Georgia's Pre-K Enrollment*.

3. Partners and Collaborative Efforts

Georgia's collaborative NA development process included leaders from multiple state agencies and a range of outside partners. Within state government agencies included: DECAL (child care licensing, CAPS, Georgia's Pre-K, QR, and nutrition programs), DPH (Children 1st, Babies Can't Wait [IDEA Part C], and Georgia Home Visiting), the Department of Education (GaDOE) (Preschool Special Education [IDEA Part B 619] and the ESSA Title programs (including Migrant Education), and the Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS) of the Department of Human Services (foster care and Prevention and Community Support Section, created as part of Families First). As shown in the stakeholder chart in Activity 6, the process also included community partners, child care and service providers, representatives from local school systems, families from across the state, and advocacy partners, such as the Georgia Early Education Alliance for Ready Students (GEEARS) and Voices for Georgia's Children. These groups were included in the NA Advisory Committee. A subset of participants most familiar with program data participated in a Data Subcommittee addressing data needs and gaps, and Child Trends conducted a data inventory survey of key state programs to learn more about data collection processes, data elements collected and their definitions, and programs' measurable indicators of progress. Family voices and additional providers will be included in the November stakeholder engagement meetings and the Community Information Sessions conducted regionally across the state. Regional focus groups were held with Family Ambassadors.

DECAL partner agencies collected and shared important data to support the process . For example, the DFCS Prevention and Community Support Section and Prevent Child Abuse Georgia provided data from 14 regional focus groups. Over 600 participants, including community providers and representatives participated in the planning sessions and identified

priorities for the State Child Abuse and Neglect Prevent Plan for 2020. DPH contributed reports to the NA process regarding its Maternal Child Health Strategic Plan.

Activity Two: B-5 Statewide Strategic Plan

1. Description & Timeline for Completion of Strategic Plan

Georgia's PDG B-5 Strategic Plan will be finalized on or before February 29, 2020.[2] DECAL has an agency-specific strategic plan guiding its work through 2024, but to date there has not been a statewide, cross-sector, early childhood strategic plan involving the entire B-5 Early Childhood State System. Conducting the PDG B-5 NA and planning in partnership with state agencies and key stakeholder organizations has enabled the state to begin to develop such a plan. Strategic Planning will be facilitated by CVIOG with support from DECAL and Child Trends, so that the same team that has managed the NA will transition into this next step.

The CACC that will create the Strategic Plan includes high-level leadership, with representation from DECAL; GaDOE representing K-3, Preschool Special Education, and Migrant Education Program; DFCS which administers Georgia's foster care system; DPH, which administers Babies Can't Wait (IDEA Part C) and Children First; Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD), representing key behavior supports and mental health services; Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG), a main credentialing entry point for much of Georgia's ECCE workforce; and the University System of Georgia (USG), representing ECE 4-year degree programs and critical research partners; representatives from the Governor's Office; family ambassadors; and advocacy groups. DECAL provided stakeholder groups most affected by B-5 policies an opportunity to provide recommendations, through focus groups with Family Ambassadors (see Activity 3), community forums, and public comment.

[2] DECAL has requested a no-cost extension until April 30, 2020, which if approved could affect this timing.

Georgia will construct the PDG B-5 Strategic Plan based on the findings of the NA, which will be completed by December 31, 2019. The Strategic Planning process will build from identified Themes (listed in Activity 1) and, for each Theme, the Cross-Agency Child Council will identify Goals, Strategies, Indicators/Measures, and Projected Implementation Timeline. Indicators are those data points that exist in administrative data (# of QR programs in a geographic area). Measures are data points that encompass some form of data analysis (% of infant and toddler classrooms that are in a three-star program within a given geographic). Below is the timeline and milestones for delivering the Strategic Plan.

Date	**Milestone**
Before 11/13	DECAL, CVIOG and DECAL draft NA Conclusions.
11/13	Present NA Conclusions to large stakeholder meeting. Stakeholders provide recommendations.
By 11/30	DECAL and CVIOG create "sample themes" based on the NA Conclusions. Finalize NA Conclusions.
By 12/15	DECAL holds Community Information Sessions hosted by the Early Education Community Partnership Coordinators. Community participants review the proposed Strategic Plan Themes and Goals and provide feedback.
By 12/15	CACC convenes to develop themes and goals for Georgia's PDG B-5 Strategic Plan. DECAL and CVIOG "wordsmith" recommendations and send back to Council for approval.
By 1/15/20	CACC meets for a second time. The Council finalizes themes and goals and drafts strategies and measures/indicators. DECAL and CVIOG incorporate recommendations and send back to Council for approval.
By 2/1/20	DECAL, CVIOG, and Child Trends draft the full PDG B-5 Strategic Plan. The plan includes an implementation system that uses ongoing data collection and analysis, in addition to ongoing communication and public engagement to track successful implementation. The Plan will point to alignment opportunities and identify areas where coordination would support Goals (e.g., alignment with agencies' Strategic Plans). Draft Strategic Plan posted for public comment. Public comment ends 2/14. Revisions made based on public comment.
By 2/21/20	CACC convenes to review drafted Strategic Plan. DECAL and CVIOG "wordsmiths" recommendations and sends out for approval. Full strategic plan is revised and posted for Public Comment.
By 2/29/20	Strategic Plan submitted for Federal Review
By 3/28/20	As part of the implementation plan, DECAL hosts webinar to share final Strategic Plan.

Date	Milestone
By 4/30/20	As part of the implementation plan, DECAL, with support from the CCAC, creates system for tracking and reporting indicators and measures.
By 7/1/20	Any new strategies developed for the Strategic Plan begin by this date.
12/31/20	First biannual report for the Strategic Plan is published.
By 1/31/21	Strategic Plan reviewed and possibly revised.

2. What Georgia Learned from Key Activities

Georgia learned three key lessons during the initial PDG: 1) the importance of a strong governance structure across state agencies and ECCE programs; 2) the need to coordinate family input and advisory councils across programs; and 3) the need to continue to integrate data across programs and provide training on the use of CACDS for community leaders, especially for data related to increasing access for focal populations.

Lesson 1: Georgia has been a leading state in terms of its ECCE governance structure since DECAL was created, but one of the key lessons learned from the initial PDG has been the importance of having strong governance structures across state agencies. DECAL administers the majority of early education programs, but other state agencies, including DPH, DHS and DOE, administer programs key to improving the ECCE system, especially for focal populations. Analyzing NA data across agencies helped identify cross-sector barriers to programs and services for Georgia's most vulnerable children and families. The creation of a CACC with leadership below the appointee level to manage the PDG is already leading to increased alignment across agencies.

Lesson 2: The NA shows that multiple programs have advisory committees for gathering family input at both the state and community level. These groups are underused as a vehicle for improving quality and access to ECCE for vulnerable families. To better capture and use family feedback and incorporate family voice and leadership at the state level, a Cross Agency Family Council will be created (See Activity 3).

Lesson 3: Georgia has one of the most developed early childhood integrated data systems in the country in CACDS. However, the NA has underscored both the need for "second generation" (see Activity Six, CACDS 2.0) improvements and increased utilization of the system. It is also important to continually disaggregate data to measure access for children and families from focal populations. Utilizing this information facilitates support around family resiliency and allows for state and program leaders to target resources.

3. How Georgia Included, Incorporated, and Aligned Comprehensive Support Services

Georgia's approach to the NA included state level agencies that serve children and their families from birth to eight, as listed above. In reviewing data and stakeholder input, Georgia found a need to focus on ensuring transition and connections for children and families, so they can enter all relevant systems and connect to a full range of services from birth though elementary school. CACDS data indicates that families from focal populations and in rural communities are not able to take advantage of key programs, including home visiting, Babies Can't Wait, and Georgia's PreK. Additionally, there are key demographics (i.e., home language) that are not consistently collected.

Georgia's PDG B-5 Strategic Plan will build on its strong ECCE foundation to address these identified needs by better aligning comprehensive supports, such as mental health resources and family resiliency activities, and creating targeted strategies for focal populations. The Strategic Plan will include Goals and Strategies to build stronger interagency collaboration, connections between ECCE sites, and additional comprehensive supports for focal populations. In particular, Georgia will focus on growing resources at the family, provider, and system level for building family knowledge and resiliency. Action steps, as outlined in Activity 3, include trauma-informed care training at the community level; expanding the reach of the Family Ambassador

program around the state while incorporating Smart and Secure Children Family Leadership training into that program; and creating CACDS 2.0 to support the work of professionals executing these action steps.

4. Change in Use of Funds, Efficiencies, and Access to Funding Streams

Georgia has significant alignment in use of funds because so many programs are housed within DECAL. In assessing whether any state or local requirements cause barriers to future coordination, Georgia found that alignment actions can be taken at the agency level and do not require legislative changes, and can be authorized through the work of the CACC. Another factor that supports Georgia's efficient use of funding is CACDS, which allows state agencies to develop unduplicated counts of children in multiple services and to understand where the same child is served in multiple agencies.

Many of Georgia's proposed activities are designed to increase efficiency both for families to access services and for cross-agency program delivery. For example, the Early Education Family Ambassadors (Activity 3) will help connect families in under-resourced communities to their peers and to parenting information and supports. The "Two Generation" pilots (Activity 3) increase efficiencies by helping families utilizing Georgia's higher education system access child care and other supports, so they are more likely to complete their credentials and find better paid work. Without child care that matches their non-traditional hour needs, student parents are less likely to be successful on their career pathway. Additionally, workforce turnover is inefficient and DECAL expenditures to help train and prepare the workforce for a career in ECCE are wasted when an individual leaves the field. Georgia's proposal (Activity 4) to study and improve the DECAL Scholars program and improve the career ladder pathway and incentives will promote more satisfying careers and reduce workforce turnover in the long run.

Activity Three: Maximizing Parental Choice and Knowledge

Through the RTT-ELC grant Georgia convened a cross-sector Family Engagement Task Force with 55 members including 4 family representatives, 2 of whom were bilingual. It issued a *Roadmap to Family Engagement* with recommendations promoting family engagement strategies and to increase family knowledge and voice into the ECCE system. Initial PDG funds developed a cadre of statewide Family Ambassadors, gathered family input on the QR family portal and child care licensing reports, and created a Developmental Milestones website for families.

The current and proposed activities will listen to and keep families informed - including families with English as a second language and families who have a young child with a disability; connect families to needed services and programs; ensure families who have concerns about their child's development or have a child with a disability are informed and connected to IDEA services and inclusive childcare; and increase meaningful engagement to inform and provide recommendations for ECCE programs and services. Using renewal PDG funds, Georgia proposes to expand or implement the following:

Initiatives	Projects	Focal Populations Targeted
1. Strengthening family voice and engaging families in their children's care and education	A. Expand Family Ambassadors B. Satcher Smart and Secure Children Parenting Leadership Program C. Creation of Cross Agency Family Council	- Dual language learners - Children with disabilities - Children living in rural areas - Children in foster care - Children living in poverty
2. Helping families understand development and connecting them to IDEA services	A. Developmental milestones website updates B. Development of family friendly licensing reports and child care program services reports C. Conducting a study to understand how families access ECCE services and connect to community services	All focal populations with an emphasis placed on: - Dual language learners - Children with disabilities - Infant Toddlers
3. Connecting families to community services	Two-generation innovation grants	All focal populations with an emphasis on:

Initiatives	Projects	Focal Populations Targeted
through strengthening partnerships and transitions		- Children living in poverty - Children with disabilities

Initiative 1: Strengthening family voice and engaging families in their children's care and education. Project A: Expanding the Family Ambassador Program. Georgia used the initial PDG to develop a cadre of 40 Early Education Family Ambassadors including foster parents, kinship caregivers, families of children with disabilities, and military families, from 28 counties across the state and representing the 6 DECAL regions. Six of the ambassadors are bilingual and languages spoken include Spanish, Swahili, Kinyarwanda, Luganda, and ASL. Their role is to support other families in accessing ECCE services and community resources, to inform state and community leaders about what families want and need to know, and to make recommendations to improve the state's mixed delivery system.

Ambassadors received two days of training to build leadership and civic engagement skills, learn about supporting child development and school readiness, and learn about the ECCE programs services and resources. They were also supported in identifying community resources such as housing, food, training and employment programs, income supports and health and mental services. Ambassadors commit to participate in at least two activities annually in their communities where they can reach young families. Activities include sharing information about ECCE services and community resources at events such as resource fairs, holiday food or gift distribution events, and health fairs; and giving presentations to local clubs or church groups. To inform and make recommendations on improving the mixed delivery system, Ambassadors participate on boards and councils in their local communities and at the state level. Two Ambassadors serve on the CACC, two serve on the DECAL Advisory board, and others participate on other community councils. Ambassadors receive stipends of $200 per training,

activity or advisory board meeting. Renewal PDG B-5 funding will be used to train an additional cohort of 40 ambassadors during each of the three grant years. Recruitment will focus on in areas with high proportions of families eligible under the federal Families First Prevent Act and children in foster care.

Georgia also proposes to strengthen the Ambassadors through collaborations with Strengthening Families Georgia (SFG) and the Georgia Connections Matter initiative (GCM). SFG is an active, multi-disciplinary partnership of nearly 50 national, state and local public and private organizations dedicated to embedding research-based Protective Factors into ECCE services and supports. SFG offers training of trainers in the Parent Café Program, an evidence-based, peer-to-peer learning process. Ambassadors will participate in the training, will facilitate groups in their communities and will receive stipends of $200 per session.

GCM is a collaboration between the Georgia Center for Child Advocacy and Prevent Child Abuse Georgia. Connections Matter is a curriculum which helps participants better understand trauma, brain development, resilience and health. The training provides concrete knowledge about Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) using Georgia data and provides strategies for strengthening personal and community resilience. Ambassadors will participate in training, will facilitate groups in their communities, and will receive stipends of $200 per session.

Project B: Smart and Secure Children (SCC) Parenting Leadership. Georgia will partner with Satcher Health Leadership Institute (SHLI) at Morehouse School of Medicine in scaling its evidence-based, peer-facilitated, and culturally tailored SSC program across the state. The 10-module program focuses on social and emotional health, developmental milestones, nutrition and physical activity, and parental self-care and well-being. The program builds organizational capacity and sustainability by developing Parent Leaders.

In the first year of the grant, up to 6 communities will be targeted based on the NA, with priority given to communities with a Trauma Informed Early Learning Collaborative (described in Activity 4). In years two and three an Ambassador will be trained in each community with a Train the Trainer model. Then the Ambassadors will redeliver the content to a cohort of families. SLHI will provide ongoing support through onsite coaching and webinars. Ambassadors will be compensated for participating in training and conducting the peer learning groups.

Project C: Cross Agency Family Council. While there are many opportunities for family input into individual agency work, including the Children's Medical Services Family Engagement Learning Communities, the Georgia Family Support Network, the DFCS Parent Advisory Council, and the Babies Can't Wait State Interagency Coordinating Council Parent Group, there is no high-level structure to empower and unify family voices. Georgia proposes to create a Cross Agency Family Council, formed from existing family advisory groups. The members of this group will make recommendations for improvement on policies and the family's experience within the system. Members will also take information back to their individual groups, thus creating strong feedback loops. The Council will meet bi-annually and representatives will be paid for time and travel.

Initiative 2: Helping families understand development and connecting them to IDEA services.

Project A: Developmental Milestones Website Updates. Georgia proposes to ensure families, including those led by non-English speakers, are able to identify signs of developmental delays as early as possible and are informed about IDEA services. Currently, DECAL offers the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) training modules for child care providers, called *Watch Me: Celebrating Milestones and Sharing Concerns.* These modules -- along with customized developmental materials from *Learn the Signs. Act Early. (LTSAE),* available in

English and Spanish -- support child care directors and teachers in supporting families on increasing knowledge on developmental milestones and surveillance, and the process to access developmental screenings and IDEA services. Georgia used the initial PDG grant to develop a *Watch Me Grow* website for families that links to LTSAE materials, milestone resources, tools, and links to specific videos focused on accessing IDEA Parts C and B and other services.

With PDG renewal funds, Georgia will translate website content into multiple languages and ensure it is culturally appropriate. Ambassadors will also provide feedback on the current development and provide recommendations on additional content. In order to ensure that families understand services available through IDEA, the CACC will work together to strengthen Child Find using LTSAE materials to ensure families access services.

Project B: Development of family-friendly licensing reports and child care program services reports. To increase family knowledge and parental choice of licensed child care settings, Georgia is engaging families and child care providers to provide input for a website upgrade. The goal is to ensure families can access the information they want and need to make well-informed child care decisions, while at the same time giving child care providers a way to share meaningful information about their programs. Through a partnership with GEEARS, DECAL hosted family focus groups and conducted interviews with child care providers across the state.

Using this input, DECAL will design a summary page for each licensed child care program using simple infographics to display the information determined to be most useful and meaningful to families. The objective is to provide licensing compliance as well as participation in child care subsidy, the nutrition program, QR, Georgia's Pre-K, and Head Start displayed in a way that is live and easily accessible, regardless of home language or reading level. Families will be able to see a three-year program history at a glance and will be provided with links and

resources for additional information on the Family Portal website. This report will support families in choosing child care responsive to their family and child's specific needs including supporting finding inclusion child care.

Project C: Conducting a study to understand how families access ECCE services and resource and connect to community services. A concern identified in the NA is how families access and navigate the ECCE system, which has multiple entry points and lacks coordination at the state and community level. While there are existing programs designed to support parents of children 0-5 in navigating the system (e.g. Help Me Grow website, Parent to Parent search engine, QR Parent Portal, the Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies warmline and ECE Inclusion and Behavior Supports helpline) and these efforts are helpful for specific services or programs, multiple access points lead to disjointed experience for both families and those who support families. Georgia proposes to utilize PDG renewal funds to create a cross-agency collaborative of family-serving agencies and nonprofit groups (Family Serving Collaborative) to inform the CACC. This group will work to identify areas for partnership, reduce duplication, increase efficiency, and maximize funding. The Collaborative will develop recommendations to leverage existing structures and the current integrated eligibility system to support the development of a more aligned system. There will be a strong focus on access to IDEA services and supporting transitions in early intervention services. The Collaborative will also include family representatives as well as have Family Ambassadors conduct family led focus groups across the state. Activities will be held at times they can attend with stipends provided for participation.

Additionally, the NA identified the need to help families access multiple services. DECAL proposes to conduct a landscape analysis of how families access ECCE resources and services. This comprehensive review will include an analysis of CACDS data between IDEA Part C and B

to better understand referral and transition activities between programs and to make recommendations for a more seamless, effective transition. The landscape will also review how families obtain information, such as websites, helplines and other resources as well as the processes families use to identify and apply for services, especially IDEA services, such as application, intake and eligibility processes and systems. The Collaborative and the Cross Agency Family Council will work together to review the landscape analysis and identify strategies to create a more aligned and easily accessible system.

Initiative 3: Connecting families to community services through strengthening partnerships and transitions - Project: Two-Generation Innovation Grants. In 2016, Georgia participated in a National Governors Association project to identify opportunities to promote two generation strategies. DECAL has funded a total of 5 capacity grants and 2 implementation grants to communities to design "Two Generation" approaches to connect parents of young children receiving ECCE supports (such as CAPS, QR Subsidy Grants, Head Start, or Georgia's Pre-K) with workforce training or postsecondary education. Grantees were required to include families on their leadership team. DECAL proposes to expand the number and scope of these grants to support additional communities, particularly those in rural communities and communities serving a high proportion of families from focal populations. In each year of the grant, Georgia will award 2 capacity building grants and 2 implementation grants.

Activity Four: Sharing Best Practices and Professional Development for the Early Childhood Workforce

Currently, DECAL has a robust approach to professional learning, designed to promote career growth and understanding of best practices in working with children and families. The current statewide professional learning system includes:

System Component	Description
Georgia Professional Development System (GaPDS)	Professional registry that helps individuals access and track professional development, credentials/degrees and movement along a career pathway
Trainings	Content specific training are offered through CCR&Rs on approved training topics for which there is a need, such as the Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards (GELDS) and the Pyramid model of social and emotional development
Georgia Training Approval (GTA)	Ensures that training offered in the state meets and aligns with program and child development standards
Specialist Networks	DECAL employs a number of highly-skilled professionals, known as Specialists, who support programs, professionals, and leaders in understanding best practices in a focal area. Focal areas include: - Georgia's Pre-K: ensures both instructional quality and adherence to GA's Pre-K guidelines - Infant Toddler: provides intensive supports for programs focused on building language and literacy skills through responsive interactions with infants and toddlers - Inclusion and Behavior Support: assists programs in supporting inclusive practices for children with disabilities or children exhibiting challenging behaviors - Professional Learning: supports ECCE professionals in understanding adult learning, facilitation techniques, developing meaningful professional learning plans, and relationship-based professional learning models
Planning Educational Activities for Children (PEACH)	Interactive lesson planning website to help teachers plan activities and lessons aligned with the GELDS (www.peach.decal.ga.gov)
Relationship-based professional learning (RBPL)	A focus on providing job-embedded supports for the workforce includes: - Professional Learning Community (PLC) facilitator training: an intensive training and certification model designed to support state leaders in using PLCs in their work - Coach Designation: described below - CCR&R TA: described in Activity 5

In addition to the focal areas described above, DECAL also maintains the DECAL Scholars program, which supports early learning professionals in obtaining ECCE credentials and degrees:

Scholars Program	Description
Educational Counseling	Free educational counseling helps the workforce make informed decisions about which credential/degree programs to choose; what offerings are available in the individual's area; and whether online, face-to-face, or hybrid offerings are best for the individual.

Scholars Program	Description
Scholarships	Provides tuition assistance for qualifying early learning professionals to obtain an ECCE degree or credential. Participants can pursue either an initial degree/credential or a higher one. The program also offers stipends to individuals to offset the cost of books, transportation, childcare, or other needs. Pilot scholarships offer additional supports to individuals in target populations, including infant/toddler teachers, family childcare professionals, bilingual teachers, and high school students.
Incentives	Offers stipend payments to individuals after receiving a degree or credential. If qualifying recipients continue employment with the same employer, they are eligible to receive either 2 or 4 bonus payments over the course of 1 – 2 years. Number and amount of payments vary depending upon the degree/credential. The goal of the program is to reduce turnover and encourage retention of high-qualified teachers in programs. The study of DECAL Scholars (mentioned below) will determine if this goal is being met.
Awards for Early Educators	Offers a one-time payment to a qualifying individual upon attaining a degree or credential. Currently, an additional $100 on top of the current stipend is paid to individuals who obtain an infant/toddler specific credential. Under this umbrella the Awards for Early Educators LEAD program offers one-time stipend payments to early learning professionals who expand their knowledge of relationship-based professional learning supports. Qualifying participants in DECAL's PLC facilitator training program and/or the Coach Designation system (currently in pilot form) receive stipends based upon the level of training or designation completed.

In addition to these supports, DECAL's system is built upon a strong foundation of standards, including the Workforce Knowledge and Competencies (WKCs) for early childhood and school age teachers, and the GELDS that describe age-appropriate expectations for children's development and learning. The GELDS are designed to be used across disciplines to encourage a shared understanding of children's development. To promote the success of multilingual learners, DECAL partnered with WIDA -- a project of the Wisconsin Center for Education Research at University of Wisconsin-Madison -- to develop complementary guidance to support DLLs; these Early English Language Development Standards (E-ELD) are designed to be used in conjunction with the GELDS to help those working with young children connect the linguistic variations and needs of DLLs across all content areas of standards-based curricula

and assessments. DECAL also worked with WIDA to develop and implement Promising Practices, a series of 14 essential actions to support DLLs and their families. Promising Practices includes a provider toolkit and training to explain the essential actions as well as program assessments that can be completed to help providers identify which actions to begin focusing on.

Based on experience, lessons learned from existing programs, and information gathered from the NA, DECAL has identified the following initiatives for the PDG grant:

Initiatives	**Projects**	**Focal Populations Targeted**
1. Supporting Career Pathways and Aligned Credentials	A. Update the WKCs for administrators, TA providers, and trainers B. Develop alternate pathways for bilingual professionals, high school students, and non-traditional students C. Evaluate and update the DECAL Scholars program	- DLLs - Infants and toddlers - Children living in rural areas
2. Enhancing Training and Job-Embedded Supports	A. Update GELDS trainings and resources, including PEACH B. Develop a cadre of early learning coaches	- DLLs - Children with disabilities
3. Supporting Community Leaders in Understanding Best Practices	Continue and expand the current Early Learning Leadership Collaboratives from the existing PDG to increased understanding of trauma-informed care	- Children experiencing homelessness - Children in foster care - Children in poverty - Children experiencing food insecurity or inadequate nutrition - Children living in rural areas

Initiative 1: Supporting Career Pathways and Aligned Credentials

DECAL operates the Georgia Professional Development System (GaPDS) to provide a career ladder and registry in which the early childhood workforce can find and track completion of aligned credentials and content specific trainings. The Child Development Associate (CDA) is an entry level credential for lead center teachers and family child care providers. Georgia proposes to clarify the multiple pathways for early learning professionals and ensure they have the necessary supports to succeed and remain in the workforce. Staff turnover is high across

child care programs. Child care centers reported losing 29% of their lead teachers and 32% of assistant teachers in the previous year. DECAL wants to provide incentives for all professionals to engage in continual improvement of skills by participating in trainings targeting the specific age levels and children (infant/toddler, children with disabilities, DLLs) the educator serves.

Project A: Workforce Knowledge and Competencies (WKCs). PDG funds will be used to engage a Work Group to examine Georgia's career pathways and align them to Georgia's WKCs. Although Georgia was able to use RTT-ELC funds to revise the WKCs for early childhood and school age professionals, DECAL must now update the competencies to inform career pathways for administrators, trainers, and TA providers. DECAL would identify an expert to inform, facilitate, and support the Work Group. DECAL will also partner with the Technical College System of Georgia to align coursework requirements with the revised WKCs.

Project B: Alternate Pathways. Based on the NA results and its experience, DECAL will strengthen supports for target audiences, including ECE professionals who speak more than one language, high school students interested in ECCE careers, and non-traditional students.

Target Audience	Description
Bilingual Professionals	DECAL proposes to strengthen the existing bilingual CDA program, designed to encourage individuals who speak more than one language to become early learning professionals. The current program has small uptake and cannot expand to cover the full state due to lack of approved CDA trainers who offer trainings in languages other than English. DECAL proposes to use PDG B-5 funds to support the costs of translators to help bilingual students during CDA class. DECAL will evaluate this strategy to track whether it promotes better success rates among bilingual students.
High School Students	Georgia proposes a partnership with public high schools in the state to support students still in school and help them graduate having already earned a CDA. Currently DECAL has piloted in one metro Atlanta school, with plans to expand to more schools in both urban and rural communities in January 2020. PDG funds would allow expansion of the grants to more schools across the state and support sustaining the program in pilot schools. DECAL's analysis of the program so far shows that, for

Target Audience	Description
	students to complete the requirements, they will need additional funding to purchase CDA books and portfolio materials.
Non-Traditional Students	DECAL proposes to develop and pilot an apprenticeship program to build the supply of credentialed early educators in the state. This program will provide individuals with on-the-job training and supports that would lead to the attainment of a credential and accommodate non-traditional students who are also working. DECAL will work with TCSG to identify a partnering technical college and early learning center to develop and implement the pilot. The goal would be to develop an alternate pathway for the early learning workforce and to understand what supports, funds, and partnerships are needed to take an apprenticeship model to scale across Georgia.

Project C: DECAL Scholars Evaluation. High turnover rates and low compensation remain a challenge for retaining a highly qualified workforce throughout the state. Georgia's most recent Child Care Market Rate Survey found the average reported hourly wage for center-based lead teachers (not Pre-K or Head Start) was $9.00 for lead teachers and $8.23 for assistant teachers; 62% of child care center respondents reported paying an average wage between $7.25 and $10.25 an hour. Georgia's Pre-K and Head Start lead teachers, on the other hand, were reported to earn $16 an hour on average. Georgia's QR Validation Study found correlation between programs with higher ratings and higher entry level wages and benefit receipt. Georgia's validation study also found only 2–4% of 2- and 3-star programs reported turnover rates in the highest category (68% or more of their lead teachers leaving in the past 12 months), compared to 11% of 1-star programs and 27% of 0-star programs. Two thirds of 2- and 3-star programs reported turnover rates of 33% or less (QR Validation Study Report #4, 2019). Similar results were found for assistant teachers.

DECAL Scholars is Georgia's strategy to promote access to higher education in service of workforce retention. DECAL will use PDG funds to contract with an evaluator to study the current DECAL Scholars program, pinpointing which aspects are most effective, where participants face challenges in their advancement, and what updates may be needed to meet the

needs of a changing workforce, especially in rural areas. The study will determine if the goals of the program are being met and any recommendations for changes that are needed, and engage members of the workforce to highlight their individual needs (e.g., more funding for tuition, support for transportation or paying for subs while in class, addressing technology needs, possible language barriers). The study will untangle differences among workforce sectors, such as professionals working in urban or rural communities and family child care providers; needs for teachers working with different age groups (e.g., infant/toddler, Pre-K); or professionals interested in moving into leadership or coaching roles. Information from the NA will be used to identify additional target audiences. Focus groups and surveys will be strategically conducted to gather information from professionals in rural communities and those working with target audiences (e.g., DLLs, infants and toddlers). In years two and three of the PDG, Georgia will use study findings to pilot new ideas and tailored incentive structures to better support.

Based on the NA, access to high-quality family child care learning homes is especially important in rural communities. In order to understand how to better support access to family child care, the aforementioned study of DECAL Scholars will examine the effectiveness of the program for family child care and access to the Family Child Care CDA. Further, DECAL intends to use the initiatives described in Project B to support the increase of high-quality providers across the state. This includes piloting the High School CDA, Bilingual CDA, and Apprenticeship programs in both rural and urban communities.

Initiative 2: Enhancing Training and Job-Embedded Supports

Through the RTT- ELC grant, DECAL established trainings, resources, and job-embedded relationship-based supports for ECCE childhood professionals, and now proposes to update training topics and strategies with PDG B-5 funding.

Project A: GELDS Training Series: One focus for this PDG B-5 grant will be improving the GELDS training series, which is offered primarily through CCR&Rs. The current GELDS training series includes four aligned trainings to increase participants' understanding of child development, lesson planning, and using the GELDS to inform instruction and assessment. Based upon information from the NA, DECAL will update the trainings to address several key areas: differentiating instruction, supporting children with disabilities through inclusive practices, and supporting DLLs. DECAL recently launched a work group of state leaders to begin to identify priorities and evidence-based practices in these areas; DECAL will use PDG funds to bring in expert consultation on these specific topics. DECAL plans to make the training appropriate for early intervention therapists, special education preschool teachers and home visitors. Further, the GELDS include a set of Kindergarten Correlations that help Pre-K teachers understand how the GELDS align with Kindergarten standards and how to support children in transitioning from Pre-K to Kindergarten. Trainings will include evidence-informed practices for supporting this important transition, utilizing the Kindergarten Correlations. After revisions are complete, DECAL will develop a Train-the-Trainer offering and all those who were previously authorized to offer the GELDS trainings will be re-trained on the new offerings. DECAL will also update the existing GELDS resources, including the PEACH online lesson planning tool, to accommodate the new knowledge added by expert consultants. As previously discussed, DECAL has a team of regionally based Inclusion and Behavior Support Specialists who help programs create inclusive environments to assist children with disabilities and children experiencing challenging behaviors. In DECAL's integrated approach, updates to training undertaken through this grant will include a focus on using the GELDS to support development

of inclusive learning environments. The state's cadre of specialists will lend their knowledge and expertise to all training revisions and resource development to ensure a focus on inclusion.

Project B: Early Learning Coaches. DECAL is currently piloting an Early Learning Coach Designation designed to assess the skills, qualifications, and experience of the state's early learning coaches. The Designation was developed based upon needs identified during the implementation of Georgia's RTT-ELC related to the need for more job-embedded supports for the ECCE workforce. Accompanying the Coach Designation is a Foundations of Coaching course for those starting in coaching. DECAL proposes to use PDG funds to launch the Designation after the pilot is done, including offering the Foundations of Coaching course in targeted areas across the state. This includes focusing on target populations to enhance coaching skill, such as Georgia's Pre-K teachers who are ready to take the next step in their careers; highly successful child care directors and family child care providers who have supported their programs in attaining a 2- or 3- star QR designation; and QR Peer Ambassadors, center directors or family child care professionals who provide peer-to-peer support for other leaders interested in improving quality in their centers. Through the Designation rollout, DECAL will provide training to targeted audiences to grow the supply of qualified coaches.

Initiative 3: Supporting Community Leaders in Understanding Best Practices

In order to provide comprehensive supports to the early learning workforce, community leaders must also have an understanding of the needs of the workforce, children, and families in their specific communities. To help encourage this growth among community leaders, Georgia proposes to continue the community leadership supports available in the current PDG B-5 grant.

Project A: Early Learning Leadership Collaboratives. The Early Learning Leadership Collaboratives (ELLCs) (part of the current grant) bring together cross-sector leadership in 6

Georgia communities to support the development of a trauma responsive approach. Participants receive training in trauma-informed care as well as support to develop a "Building a Response to Trauma" action plan. Communities are also awarded funds to implement their action plans. DECAL proposes to expand the current ELLC model into six additional communities per grant year and offer a $10,000 grant per community to support implementation of a project from their "Building a Response to Trauma" action plans. Further, existing ELLCs will have the opportunity to continue their work, expanding their trauma informed practices and developing knowledge in other areas as identified by the ELLCs, such as instructional leadership, child development, or two generation approaches.

Activity Five: Improving Overall Quality and Service Integration, Expanding Access and Developing New Programs (including subgranting)

Georgia is proposing initiatives that will increase access to quality ECCE at both the state and community level. This includes three projects that will strengthen Quality Rated (QR) as well as two community subgrant projects that will support children and families in under-resourced and rural communities benefiting from Georgia's strong ECCE system. Preliminary analysis of child care access and quality data indicates that the PDG focal populations are not being served in the highest quality child care programs (2- and 3-star rated programs). In order to support increasing access to quality, DECAL proposes the following initiatives:

Initiatives	Projects	Focal Populations Targeted
1. Update and Strengthen Quality Rated	a) Revise the QR System b) Enhance QR TA c) Develop a Language and Literacy Endorsement	- Infants and toddlers - Children with disabilities - Dual language learners
2. Community Grants	a) Family Child Care Hubs b) Community Grants	- Children with disabilities - Dual language learners

Initiative 1: Update and Strengthen Quality Rated

Based upon guidance from the DECAL Advisory Committee, Georgia has set a goal that by the end of 2020, all eligible child care programs participating in Georgia's subsidy program (CAPS) must be Quality Rated (QR). In setting this goal, Georgia seeks to make sure families receiving CAPS can choose QR providers across the state. Georgia has made significant progress, but data show gaps. Presently, 54% of providers receiving CAPS have achieved a star-rating; these providers serve 66% of children who receive CAPS. Georgia's QR validation study showed the highest benefits at 3-star providers. The study also found that infant and toddler classrooms were more likely to be lower rated. The chart below, based on CAPS administrative data, points to inequitable access to higher rated programs for children receiving CAPS.

Quality Rated Programs	One Star	Two Star	Three Star
Overall	22%	51%	27%
Participating in CAPS	31%	52%	18%
Not Participating in CAPS	15%	51%	34%

Furthermore, when looking at specific subpopulations of CAPS recipients, those who would benefit the most from high quality are more likely to be in lower rated programs. For example, among children in foster care in a QR program, only 14% are in a three star. For children experiencing homelessness or in families of very low income, the percentages are lower (11% and 12% respectively).

In order to address the need for higher quality among programs receiving CAPS, DECAL has put a number of support systems in place to achieve the 2020 goal. While much attention has been paid to what will happen in 2020, DECAL recognizes the need to begin focusing on the system's needs beyond 2020. When the goal is met, most of Georgia's child care providers will be included in QR, which means the face of child care in the state will have changed significantly. This means the supports provided to child care providers must also change. DECAL proposes to use PDG funds to support these required changes.

Project A: Revise Quality Rated. While Georgia's validation study did find that QR appropriately distinguishes levels of quality, the study findings also suggested that DECAL consider possible changes to QR. As the system has been in place since 2012, appropriate revisions, based on research and best practices, can strengthen QR and ensure that it is meeting the needs of each and every young child and family. First, the validation study suggested that DECAL rethink the role of the portfolio, designed to measure structural quality. Currently, star ratings are heavily weighted toward the observation (process quality), with 95% of the variance in ratings explained by the process quality score. However, providers are spending a disproportionate amount of time on the portfolio, and much of the TA is geared toward helping providers complete it. Second, providers and stakeholders, particularly the QR Advisory Committee, have recommended changes to the way that ratings are explained and communicated to families. Third, the validation study found statistically significant correlations with star rating and work climate. Revisions could incorporate additional work climate measures. Finally, QR revisions could incorporate how well QR assesses services for focal populations. This could include addressing areas identified in the Needs Assessment, such as mental health supports.

In year one, this project will engage the services of a facilitator to guide a cross-agency team in making recommendations for Quality Rated. In year two, the facilitator will support stakeholder engagement, the development of implementation strategies, and creating a new communication and marketing plan. In year three, the state will implement the QR revisions and a communication and marketing plan. PDG funds will be used for a facilitator and communication materials.

Project B: Enhance Quality Rated TA. While moving the programs serving children in CAPS into the QR system, Georgia wants to ensure the programs are able to increase their rating

so that children from families with low incomes will benefit. The bulk of TA CCR&Rs provide now is focused on helping programs become rated, which includes an intense focus on the Environment Rating Scales (ERS). DECAL set a benchmark for the CCR&Rs that 95% of programs going through the process would achieve at least 1 star. Currently, all CCR&Rs meet this benchmark. Based on feedback from child care providers, community partners, and CCR&R staff in the NA, there is a need to refocus TA on practices that support sustaining quality and to develop a consistent TA model across the state. DECAL plans to enhance TA in two ways. First, rather than focus on the ERS tools, DECAL would like to understand the impact on programs if TA is focused on quality practices: what quality instruction looks like at each age, how to engage families, understanding child development, and differentiating instruction. Second, each CCR&R uses a slightly different approach to TA, making it difficult for DECAL to measure and understand what aspects of the work are having an impact on programs. DECAL proposes to increase the focus of TA to be on Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) so that programs can continue to progress well beyond earning the ERS rating. To advise DECAL on how to move toward a CQI approach, and also to address the need for increased continuity of approach across the CCR&Rs, Georgia proposes to have an expert consultant facilitate a work group comprising CCR&R staff and child care providers to develop recommendations for an updated TA model.

Project C: Develop a Language and Literacy Endorsement. DECAL proposes to pilot a Language and Literacy Endorsement, which is a priority of Governor Kemp. This endorsement would both recognize programs for improved language and literacy practices and provide supports to programs as they are in the process of earning the endorsement. In 2019, DECAL convened a panel of state and national experts to make recommendations, which included: 1) making programs that have either a 2- or 3- star rating eligible to participate; 2) prioritizing

programs and communities serving high proportions of children and families from vulnerable and underserved populations; 3) providing participating programs with resources to improve evidence-informed practices; proven instructional and relationship-based support strategies for developing a high-quality early learning workforce; and 4) aligning the endorsement with the GELDS. For the pilot, DECAL proposes to select 12 programs, and produce a plan for scalability and sustainability of both practice and professional learning. PDG funding will be used to seek proposals from qualified organizations to develop the Endorsement's professional learning plan and method, as well as to develop, implement, and oversee the initial pilot. PDG funding will also provide funding for bonus packages for the pilot programs that receive the endorsement.

Initiative 2: Community Grants

The community level proposals are in response to NA Themes related to barriers to parent choice and access to high quality care and services. At the local level, Georgia proposes two community grants. One is a pilot of family child care learning home networks to increase access to and quality of family child care learning homes (FCCLH). Data from the NA indicates there has been a significant decline in the number of FCCLHs, which often provide care during alternate hours for working families, serve a significant number of infants and toddlers and children with disabilities, and offer the only child care setting in some rural areas of the state. The second proposal is specialized grants to community organizations or collaboratives to improve access for focal populations or targeting a specific need identified in the NA.

Project A: Family Child Care Hubs. DECAL has experience in supporting network-based strategies to build the supply of quality family child care homes. DECAL is currently an Early Head Start – Child Care Partnership grantee with the Office of Head Start. As part of that grant, DECAL has implemented a FCCLH model specifically targeted to home providers serving DLLs

with Spanish as a home language. This grant utilizes a "hub" model subgranted to a CCR&R that uses coaching and resource supports to enable licensed FCCLHs to meet the Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS). The Partnerships layer CAPS funding and federal EHS grant dollars to ensure that infants and toddlers eligible for CAPS also receive services meeting federal HSPPS standards. The hub model has been particularly successful in working with FCCLHs as evidenced by the high retention among the FCCLHs. Additionally, other entities have been developing different models of FCCLH networks and different states have implemented similar models demonstrating success. These positive initiatives are taking place against a backdrop of FCCLHs decreasing in Georgia.

Between April 2015 and April 2019, Georgia has seen a 6% increase in child care centers but a 31% decrease in FCCLHs, resulting in reduced access for many families and in many rural areas. According to the National Center on Early Childhood Quality Assurance, research indicates that, with the appropriate supports, a staffed FCCLH model can increase quality and provide a sustainable income for providers so that they can better manage the demands of running their business and focus more on the children in their care.[3] Intensive relationship-based coaching can help recruit new providers to become licensed faster and more successfully launch a business. Addressing the decline in FCCLHs in Georgia provides a system-level benefit by expanding parental choice and access to higher quality ECE and comprehensive ECCE services in certain geographic areas (rural) or for specific populations (infants and toddlers, DLLs).

DECAL will create three to five FCCLH Support Networks, comprising FCCLHs with a staffed "hub" that supports and aligns resources for providers and the children/families they serve, provides business service resources, and supports a Professional Learning Community

[3] National Center on Early Childhood Quality Assurance (2017). *Developing a Staffed Family Child Care Network: A Technical Assistance Manual.*

(model described in Activity 4) in each of the networks, utilizing lessons from emerging models around the country. The networks will be located in under-resourced geographic areas, defined by looking at data on access to high quality for the populations identified above. Data points may include: rural status, poverty and unemployment rates, licensed capacity, estimated number and percentage of children 0-5 being served, number of children 0-5 in foster care, number of children experiencing homelessness, and estimated number of children who are DLLs.

The model will include implementing TA in a relationship-based approach and implementing an evaluation system that includes program (quality), work climate (provider stress/satisfaction surveys), and child and family (surveys, possibly assessments). The network will either work with an existing group of providers and support them in the rating process (or rerating process) or target an area where more licensed capacity is needed and FCCLHs provide the best option, such as in rural counties. DECAL will serve as the lead and contract with either a CCR&R serving the areas selected or a local Technical College (DECAL will pilot both). Georgia proposes to use PDG B-5 funds to directly support providers and hubs. Providers will be required to be actively serving children receiving a CAPS scholarship.

In year one, Georgia will utilize national research, Georgia-specific data, and input from state and community stakeholders to develop pilot models for FCCLH Networks that are responsive to their community and family needs. For example, one community may need additional FCCLHs so the pilot might focus on supporting new FCCLHs through the licensing process. In year two, 3-5 FCCLH Support Network pilots will be launched; these sites will continue in year three, and PDG funds will also support an evaluation of the project.

Project B: Community Grants. One of the findings of the NA has been to better support families navigating the system, which may be a particular challenge for focal populations. By

providing community-level grants that enable local collaboration to plan and implement projects specifically geared toward local needs, families and children will have better access to services, and the overall system benefits. Georgia proposes community grants to cross-sector community collaboratives to focus on either a critical population or a specific community need, or both. As with Two Generation Innovation grants (including those proposed in Activity 3), DECAL will offer both capacity building and implementation grants; the state is proposing grants totaling up to $390,000 a year. The grants will be for one year with capacity building grantees eligible to apply for implementation grants the next year or apply to continue their capacity building strategies. Implementation grants will be eligible for a one-year renewal.

Collaboratives will be able to select from specific grant options that include prioritizing focal populations such as children in poverty, children in foster care, children who are homeless, and/or dual language learners. Collaboratives will be required to demonstrate need and also describe how their proposed project will increase access to comprehensive services for this population or how their proposed topic will move the needle in other areas.

DECAL will use the first six months of the grant to develop the request for proposals and define the menu options, in consultation with stakeholders and drawing from the NA. The second six months will be directed to disseminating the application, providing potential applicants with basic information, and selecting grantees. In year two, grantees will be chosen and required to submit a formal project plan within three months. In year three, grantees can reapply for either their current grant or -- for grantees with a capacity building grant -- apply for an implementation grant. Georgia will evaluate the effectiveness of this strategy in years two and three.

In summary, these two initiatives and five projects support the raising quality and improving access at both the state and community level. The table below shows that objectives related to these initiatives are SMART:

	Update and Strengthen Quality Rated	Community Grants
Specific and Measurable	• TA enhancements will include timely release of recommendations, success of pilots, and roll out goals to ensure all trainers are skilled in new approaches. • QR 2.0 measures included a report on recommendations and included relevant analyses. • The endorsement will include a report on proposed PD and pilot results.	• For Family Child Care Learning Home Hubs, the state will develop key indicators and measures to gauge the success of the pilots, including means of measuring impact on providers and families. • Measurements for the community grants include the number of grantees plus the metrics that will be developed for grantees to report, including the ability to reach and improve conditions for target populations.
Achievable and Realistic	• DECAL has experience in revising PD and working with the CCR&R's. (TA) • DECAL has experience in conducting stakeholder engagement for creating policy change. • DECAL has implemented a QR endorsement (Inclusion) and while successful will bring lessons learned to this project.	• The FCCLH project is achievable as demonstrated through DECAL's success in administering a similar model in its EHS-CCP grant, and other examples in Georgia and other states. • DECAL has awarded community grants and has been successful in recruiting grantees and demonstrating success.
Time Scaled	• All projects are appropriately scaled to conduct research and data analyses, stakeholder engagement, IT requirements, and sufficient time for implementation.	• Both projects are appropriately scaled to conduct research and data analyses, stakeholder engagement, IT requirements, and sufficient time for implementation.

Activity Six: Monitoring, Evaluation, Data Use for Continuous Improvement, Meaningful Governance and Stakeholder Engagement

1. Data Integration, Management and Data Use

In 2010, DECAL began constructing an early childhood integrated data system called the Cross Agency Child Data System (CACDS). The system began connecting child data across

programs in 2013 and greatly expanded during Georgia's RTT-ELC grant period (2014–2018). CACDS now includes early childhood data from Georgia's Pre-K, Head Start and Early Head Start grantees, Babies Can't Wait (IDEA Part C), Preschool Special Education (IDEA Part B, Section 619), the Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS) subsidy program (CCDF), Georgia Home Visiting, and other DECAL programs serving children and families in the state. Plans to include data from Georgia's foster care system are currently being developed, and the state envisions a time when the data connects to TANF, WIC, and Medicaid data. CACDS also connects to the Pre-K-to-workforce statewide longitudinal data system (GA AWARDS), allowing for analyses across systems. CACDS provides state leaders an unduplicated count of children receiving supports and services in one or multiple public programs.

Georgia has used its data infrastructure to make information available to the public and its key partners. In 2017, Georgia launched a public-facing website (http://gacacds.com/) that includes standard and customizable reports through which ECCE partners can download aggregate child enrollment reports. In addition, the state won a Kellogg Foundation–funded grant from ECDataWorks at the University of Pennsylvania to design data visualization tools to improve the delivery and use of Georgia's early childhood data. Through this partnership, the state developed a Governance Dashboard to help manage requests, data and policies. CACDS was also added to existing tools on the Get Georgia Reading Campaign website.

Data Elements. CACDS receives a standard set of data elements from all programs listed above – child care, IDEA Parts B & C, Georgia Home Visiting, Georgia's Pre-K, Head Start, and Early Head Start – that includes child name, birth date, gender, race and ethnicity, and service begin and end dates. Most programs capture and send the child's home address as well; otherwise the address of the site where they are receiving care is provided. Other data elements

are collected inconsistently from programs, including SSN, disability status, attendance data, home language, or parent and family data.

Data Linkages. CACDS receives data from Georgia's licensing and Quality Rated database, but only CAPS and Georgia's Pre-K have a provider ID that links to this data. Thus, the ability to use CACDS data to analyze access to quality care is currently limited to children in CAPS or Georgia's Pre-K, because there is not a strong connection to information about Head Start sites or sites that serve children with disabilities. At the end of this subsection is a proposed activity to strengthen the ability to link quality care program level and child level data.

Using Data to Inform Transition Practices. As part of the ECDataWorks project, DECAL has incorporated additional data usage and data literacy training so that the data can be used to inform decision making. Trainings have included all of the DECAL's Early Education Community Partnership Coordinators and CAPS Family Support staff. The purpose of each is so that they can both use the data in their own work and train local leaders. Some examples:

Leader	**Usage**
Brett Copeland, DECAL Two Generation Innovation Grants	Grant applications looking at community needs
Zoe Myer, Cook County Family Connections Partnership	Demonstrating how well her community is utilizing ECCE services
Tammie Collins, United Way, Macon	Creating Two-Gen strategies and initiatives
Arianne Weldon, Get Georgia Reading	Connecting CACDS data to tools developed for Georgia's Third Grade Reading work

A key partner of CACDS has been GA AWARDS, which was created through Georgia's K-12 Race to the Top Grant and now receives funding through state appropriations. GA AWARDS has developed a number of public dashboards that can be tailored to the community level, such as a data map detailing student mobility, student demographics, and standardized test performance, and a "schools like mine" dashboard that allows parents, educators, and

community members to compare schools with similar populations. As GA AWARDS links to CACDS, data from these community level dashboards can be used with CACDS data.

Communities are also able to utilize the Online Analytical Statistical Information System (OASIS) through the Department of Public Health. This dashboard provides key B-5 data at the community level such as births, infant mortality, and Community Health Needs Assessments.

Assessing the Data Literacy of Key Users. As DECAL hosts different data use trainings, it has become evident that the state needs to focus on data literacy. Through funding from the CCDBG Implementation Research and Evaluation Grant and in partnership with Child Trends, DECAL's Research and Policy Analysis team has piloted data literacy and management training that is being incorporated into future data use trainings. The ECDataWorks grant will also support training on using CACDS tools with community leaders and statewide partners in DECAL's six regions between late 2019 and early 2020.

Interagency Data Governance. DECAL serves as the administering agency for CACDS, responsible for housing the physical system; creating a management structure and appointing personnel to manage daily operations; coordinating bi-annual Leadership Committee meetings as well as quarterly Research Committee and Executive Committee meetings; managing communication and research requests; and overseeing the CACDS research agenda. The Executive Committee, consisting of one representative from each participating data contributor, develops, adopts, and monitors rules and policies for CACDS. The Research Committee includes a lead researcher from each participating agency and is responsible for reviewing research requests and setting a CACDS research agenda that encourages interagency collaboration.

A single MOU is in place enabling state agencies to share data with CACDS, signed by leadership of DECAL, GaDOE, DPH, and DFCS. In addition, 32 MOUs are in place with

individual Head Start grantees in Georgia. Finally, a data sharing agreement allows the Georgia Child and Family Policy Lab to receive CACDS data related to CAPS and Pre-K. The Policy Lab is a multi-agency partnership led by Georgia State University to link administrative data and support statewide policy alignment.

CACDS is compliant with the Federal Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974, and all state data security policies and statutes. All CACDS data are secured both in transit and in storage. CACDS complies with all applicable National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) Security Controls required for state and federal compliance. A policy manual that includes a user guide and data request process is being finalized for release in late 2019.

Unique Identifiers and Distinct Count. CACDS uses defined rules to assign a unique identifier to data files for tracking children across programs and services, and across time. Children in CACDS are matched across programs and deduplicated by leveraging capabilities within the state's Pre-K–to–workforce SLDS, GA AWARDS. During this process, children in CACDS are also assigned a GA AWARDS unique identifier. As a result, CACDS has the capacity to link early childhood information to the SLDS.

Because of the technical investments made into CACDS and the SLDS, one of Georgia's data strengths is the ability to derive unduplicated counts of children across programs. For example, users can select a specific county, an age in years, and the programs of interest and know how many children are being served in that county. The results can be further separated by race and ethnicity and by gender. The unduplicated count of children in multiple programs can then be compared to population data to measure the reach of these programs and gauge relative strengths and weaknesses in communities. CACDS is also used to review data on participation rates for children with disabilities in public programs. Transitions between programs are also of

high interest, such as children referred from the early intervention point of entry (Children 1st) to IDEA Part C, or the transition from IDEA Part C to IDEA Part B, Section 619.

Georgia also maintains unique identifiers for its workforce through the Georgia Professional Development System (GaPDS), an early learning workforce registry and training registration system. GaPDS is required for Georgia's Pre-K staff, for staff of providers that become Quality Rated, and for members of the ECCE workforce participating in various DECAL programs, such as DECAL Scholars. Participation by all other members of the workforce is voluntary.

CACDS supports active use by Georgia Stakeholders. From June 2018 to July 2019 there were over 1,600 visitors to the website, with 84% of visitors from within Georgia. In 2019, there have been multiple outreach efforts related to CACDS, including a presentation at the Georgia Head Start Association spring conference and a webinar with the Georgia Public Health Association – and monthly users have nearly tripled, to 233 per month. Most users requesting reports indicate they work for a state agency (61%), while 16% identified as a community partner and 12% as a researcher. One goal in Georgia's proposal will be to increase overall use, and particularly to increase data use at the community level.

Proposed CACDS Revision Project. Georgia is proposing a project to identify and implement needed revisions to CACDS (envisioned as CACDS 2.0). The overall goal of CACDS 2.0 is to make necessary upgrades that will increase the capacity of the system but also increase the use of CACDS at the community level. This includes making the tools accessible and user friendly, marketing them appropriately, and ensuring the information partners find is helpful and meets their needs.

DECAL proposes to utilize an external contractor to assist DECAL and CACDS leadership in creating and implementing a strategic plan. The external contractor will be procured within the

first three months of the grant. Specific project activities will begin in April 2020, with the Strategic Plan in year One and project activities starting year Two. DECAL expects the strategic plan to address the following:

- Strengthening data processes such as developing a data validation processes and creating a data dictionary with plans to update regularly; creating additional communication loops between CACDS administrators at DECAL and other programs' data leads to ensure data quality; and developing an operations manual for functions performed by DECAL as the lead administrative agency for CACDS.
- Expanding data collection, including adding existing data elements collected by partnering programs such as home language, homelessness status, and family-level data; including more data sources from state programs in health, social services, and child welfare; connecting to the state's workforce data; and exploring the creation of unique identifiers for families and early learning providers across programs.
- Reviewing the data ecosystem, assessing how communities are using data, and developing ways to improve data literacy for community stakeholders.
- Expanding reporting capacity, including developing reports on the interconnections between programs and the transition to Kindergarten; exploring reports on shared data across CACDS and the SLDS; and adding general population data points to program reports for context.
- Supporting updates and revisions based on the NA, including the generation of reports that can be tailored at the county, zip code, and census tract level and developing a research agenda where the CACDS Research Committee will regularly revisit the NA findings. It is estimated that these reports, and resources for ongoing maintenance, will be finalized in the first quarter of 2021 and will go live by May 1, 2021.

- Increasing CACDS use through redesigning the reporting website with an eye to user experience; improving data visualization tools in partnership with Get Georgia Reading and putting a maintenance plan in place; developing marketing materials and supporting consistent messaging by partners and stakeholders; and expanding the knowledge and use of CACDS to more stakeholder groups beyond the participating data contributors, with regional trainings with key community partners on using the data tools; and
- Reviewing and revising DSA and MOUs.

2. Monitoring, Evaluation and Continuous Improvement

Promoting Accountability Across the State's Mixed Delivery System. Georgia will continue to implement different tools and methods to promote accountability across the state's B-5 mixed delivery system, demonstrating that state leadership is both answerable and responsible in maintaining programs that best meet children, family, and program needs. Specific examples include the QR system, the state's use of data, and its use of research and evaluation. All are tools and methods the state is utilizing now and seeking to expand with PDG funds.

QR is used to assess, improve, and communicate ECCE quality. As an accountability tool, it demonstrates statewide commitment to supporting and rewarding ECCE quality for the state's youngest learners and communicates to families the importance of quality. When families use the DECAL provider search tool, QR programs appear first. The 2020 goal of all providers receiving subsidy funds being QR demonstrates the state's commitment to only invest funds in programs that are higher quality and sends the message that children and families from focal populations have a right to a high-quality ECCE program. By including standards that incorporate nutrition, physical activity, and family engagement, QR encompasses a comprehensive ECCE approach. QR programs must be re-rated every three years.

Programs that are not yet included in QR are monitored by DECAL's licensing division twice a year, primarily for health and safety, but also for quality measures such as staffing ratios. Unlicensed programs that receive CAPS funding are monitored annually for health and safety.

The state's use of data is also a tool to promote accountability. CACDS is an example of how data systems can be used for this purpose. CACDS provides state and local leaders with data that show where children and families are not able to access services, which supports accountability on questions of resource distribution.

The state holds itself accountable by using research and evaluation. Georgia is funding a longitudinal study that follows a representative sample of children from Pre-K through fifth grade; this will help leaders understand the impact of their investments and plan for future investments. The state is funding child assessments and classroom observations each year of the study so state leaders can measure impacts for each school year and connect that to quality. This will help state leaders know where additional resources are needed.

DECAL has extensive experience managing federal and private grants, including grants that encompass interagency projects such as the RTT-ELC. DECAL also has experience and success in sustaining grant funded, time-limited projects. DECAL houses an internal Audits and Compliance Unit that monitors subgrantees, including an EHS-CCP grant. To prioritize programs who will be audited, the unit utilizes a risk assessment model. DECAL also monitors providers for compliance with rules and regulations and for fidelity to implementing programs.

Areas of Fragmentation/Overlap. Georgia has experience in addressing fragmentation and overlap, including the 2004 creation of DECAL. DECAL's growth, such as in 2012 when it became the lead agency for CCDF and therefore the lead administrator in Georgia's subsidy program (CAPS), has helped to facilitate stronger program alignment. This has created

coordinated efforts to increase access for children receiving subsidies to higher quality ECE programs. The Head Start Collaboration Office is part of DECAL, which has created alignment opportunities between Head Start and Georgia's Pre-K. Finally, Georgia's RTT-ELC grant was used to address fragmentation and overlap between agencies; for example, the Kindergarten Readiness Check project created collaboration opportunities between GaDOE and DECAL.

Despite these successes, the NA has identified areas of fragmentation and overlap in Georgia's ECCE system. Two areas of fragmentation are cross-agency collaboration and system supports for families. Challenges in cross-agency collaboration include a focus on program- or agency-specific evaluation activities, needs assessments, and strategic planning; better cross-agency communication could eliminate duplicative activities. The second area is supporting families in "navigating the system." Data show that many families are not able to take advantage of available services. For example, only 47% of 2-year olds in Babies Can't Wait (IDEA Part C) in 2017 were enrolled in Preschool Special Education (IDEA Part B) in 2018, showing that many families receiving support in one program do not continue the supports in later years.

To address these findings, Georgia will employ the following strategies:

Strategy	**Description**
CACC	This group will address fragmentation and overlap in several ways. It will be the lead group in constructing Georgia's PDG B-5 strategic plan, which will include addressing fragmentation and overlap issues identified in the NA. The group will continue to meet after the Strategic Plan is finalized to monitor progress and add additional strategies if needed. Individual members of the group will be responsible for ensuring that their respective agencies follow up as needed.
Research and Evaluation	Georgia has used B-5 research to identify and address fragmentation and overlap – such as Georgia's Pre-K Longitudinal Study, which has provided an opportunity for greater alignment between DECAL and GaDOE.
Existing Initiatives and Coalitions	Several ongoing initiatives include cross-agency representation, including the Get Georgia Reading Campaign, Infant and Toddler and Child Care Affordability Coalitions hosted by GEEARS, and a recently convened Language and Literacy Strategic Planning group hosted by the Governor's Office of Student Achievement (GOSA). The Children's Cabinet is also

Strategy	Description
	working with PDG B-5 leadership to address issues of fragmentation. All of these groups have been engaged in the PDG B-5 work and will continue to be used to address fragmentation and overlap.
CACDS 2.0	The CACDS 2.0 project will improve existing reports and develop new reports that can be used at the community level for local entities to better understand program coordination and family utilization of services. Greater use of CACDS for the purpose of strengthening coordination and family support will be an effective strategy.
Additional Research and Resources Geared toward Families	Several ongoing and proposed PDG B-5 projects address the need to better support families navigating the system. These include the Family Ambassador's Project (Activity 3), revision of Quality Rated, including improving family communication strategies (Activity 5), Family Data Landscape Analysis (Activity 3), Innovation Grants for Communities (Activity 5), and the focus groups proposed to better understand families' experience with the integrated eligibility system (Bonus Section – Coordinated Application, Eligibility, and Enrollment for Families). These activities will address the need for better coordination of services from the family perspective by gathering additional information about family needs and piloting responsive strategies.

Update, Enhance, and Implement Program Performance Evaluation Plan. During the first quarter of the grant, the state will review and expand the Program Performance Evaluation Plan. This process entails using external partners such as Child Trends and CVIOG to refine program performance measures for grant activities and indicators for the grant's outcomes. This review will include identifying additional data sources and a data collection/analysis plan for any new data needed. This also includes adding any additional research evaluation questions.

There are five stages in Georgia's PPE (see PPE section). In Quarter One, the state, led by DECAL's Research and Policy Analysis team, will convene the CACDS Research Committee to serve as the PDG B-5 PPE experts. This group will review the plan and make recommendations for expansion. In Quarter Two leaders from this group will present their recommendations for the revised PPE to the CACC for review and approval. Quarters One and Two also include the development of a process for data collection and reporting. In Quarter Three the state will begin formal implementation of the revised plan. Each year, DECAL's Research and Policy Analysis

team will produce a report detailing the findings from the year. DECAL will also convene a PDG Evaluation Subcommittee, a group of state researchers and policy experts, to review findings and offer guidance. This group will meet twice a year, with the first meeting in Fall 2020.

The review of the PPE will include ensuring existing data represents the focal populations identified in the NA and any bias is minimized. Representative sampling is not easy, especially with families more likely to be vulnerable and underserved; the state will use a variety of techniques and use external and community resources for sample recruitment efforts.

Purpose, Intended Audience, and Expected Evolution: This purpose of Georgia's PPE can be defined in five objectives discussed in further detail in the PPE section: 1) Measure the state's progress in meeting its PDG B-5 Goals (described in the Expected Outcomes Section) and the Short-Term and Long-Term Outcomes (described in the Logic Model); 2) Monitor PDG B-5 program performance through appropriate program performance measures; 3) Use the Program Performance Evaluation process to identify and address data gaps; 4) Incorporate the Program Performance Evaluation Plan as part of the state's continuous quality improvement efforts; and 5) Align the PDG B-5 Program Performance Evaluation Plan to other ongoing research.

The intended audience for the PPE is broad and Georgia has a history of tailoring reports and evaluations for specific audiences. Intended audiences include: 1) Agency and Program Leadership: the PPE is designed to release findings throughout the evaluation and not only at the end; 2) advocacy groups and other stakeholders: the state works with advocacy groups and other stakeholders to ensure that the research questions and methodologies are designed to incorporate all appropriate voices; 3) ECCE leaders and programs: similar to the way the state has incorporated QR Validation results, the state will include providers in external committees to

support unpacking and discussing the results; and 4) Families: the state will utilize family ambassadors to support sharing evaluation results and providing family feedback.

As the PPE is revised, finalized, and implemented, the evaluation will continue to evolve. Part of the reason the state will incorporate ongoing research result releases and external stakeholder groups is to understand what other research questions should be asked. Therefore, it is expected that research questions and data collection will change over time.

Key Questions and Their Alignment with the Strategic Plan: As discussed in Activity Two, part of the strategic plan will be incorporating measures and indicators. These will align with PPE and therefore may require some revision to the PPE. Additionally, the PPE will include specific research questions that align with the goals and strategies of the Strategic Plan.

Key Evaluation Personnel and Their Responsibilities: DECAL's Research and Policy Analysis team will be the lead for the PPE. This team is led by Director Randy Hudgins and is under the Quality Innovations and Partnership Division at DECAL, where Dr. Bentley Ponder serves as Deputy Commissioner. The PDG Evaluation work is overseen by Rob O'Callaghan. The three collectively have over 30 years' experience as part of DECAL's research and evaluation agenda. The role of DECAL's Research and Policy Analysis team is to oversee the processes, ensure that the PPE aligns with other PDG activities, and manage any external PDG B-5 external contracts.

Lead researchers from Child Trends and CVIOG will also assist in the evaluation plan. Both groups have led commissioned research from DECAL and other Georgia agencies. The role of the groups will be to help design research strategies and oversee statistical data analyses. The PDG Director (Clayton Bassett) and Deputy Commissioner for Pre-K and Instructional Supports (Susan Adams) are also part of the research work and will help ensure alignment with PDG activities. The latter also serves on the CACC.

Finally, the CACDS Research Committee will advise this work and there will be an external stakeholder evaluation committee that will meet twice a year. The CACDS Research Committee will oversee the cross-agency work aligned with CACDS. The purpose of the latter group is to unpack results and suggest additional evaluation questions and strategies.

Potential Data Sources and Necessary Improvements to Data Capacities. Concurrent with the NA, the state will identify new data needs and how to address them. The state does not anticipate the need for any new data systems but has requested funding for upgrades to current systems, including data infrastructure, reporting, and user experience improvement.

The state relies heavily on CACDS. Specifically, the following data sources are currently used: 1) Georgia Professional Development System (GaPDS): includes data related to Georgia's Early Education Workforce and Training; 2) KOALA: Georgia's Child Care Licensing data system); 3) Provider Self Service: the web interface for child care providers to update and contribute information to the KOALA data system); 4) Quality Rated; 5) PANDA (Ga Pre-K data system): includes child level data and provider data; and 6) GA AWARDS: Georgia's P-Labor Data System. These systems will provide much of the child-level data needed for the identified metrics and milestones. During the first two months of the grant, the state will review NA research results and create new evaluation questions, therefore identifying any additional data sources. Any gaps will be addressed by developing an immediate data collection plan or by identifying a plan to collect data in the future. While the state holds a great deal of administrative data, it still needs to develop a comprehensive ECCE data analysis plan. Doing this as part of the PPE will help identify any data gaps and then develop a plan to address them. In Georgia, it is important to note that the child serving state agencies have created in-house and connected data

systems and do not rely on third party contracts to make data revisions. This allows Georgia to address data needs in a timely manner.

Approach to Data Collection and Measurement: As discussed in the PPE, Stage Three refers to the specific data collection activities. For this stage, Georgia will use language from a Results-Based Accountability Framework[4]. This framework distinguishes between population and program, and differentiates outcomes, indicators, and performance measures.

Data collection incorporates both quantitative and qualitative methods, such as surveys and focus groups. Sampling efforts include those to ensure subpopulations are represented. Where possible, random and stratified sampling designs are employed. If random sampling cannot be used, efforts are made to ensure representation.

Leveraging Findings to Support Continuous Quality Improvement: The state has vast experience in creating research to policy feedback loops and using research to inform continuous quality improvement. For example, for QR, there are bi-weekly meetings with program leadership and research staff to discuss data analyses, ongoing research, and policy implications. Meetings regarding the NA have utilized similar tactics with a wide range of stakeholders engaged in discussing research to policy implications. These efforts will continue in the PPE.

Periodically Updating the PPE With the Needs Assessment and Strategic Plan: The state's program performance evaluation plan has been designed to incorporate revisions based on the results from the NA and to therefore inform the Strategic Plan. As part of the PPE revision, the state will review NA results to determine if: 1) quality, availability, and alignment differs for focal populations; 2) additional research is needed to better assess quality, availability, and alignment for these subpopulations; and 3) if additional subpopulations should be added.

[4] Friedman, M. (2008). *Trying Hard Is Not Good Enough: How to Produce Measurable Improvements for Customers and Communities*. Victoria, BC, Canada: Trafford Publishing.

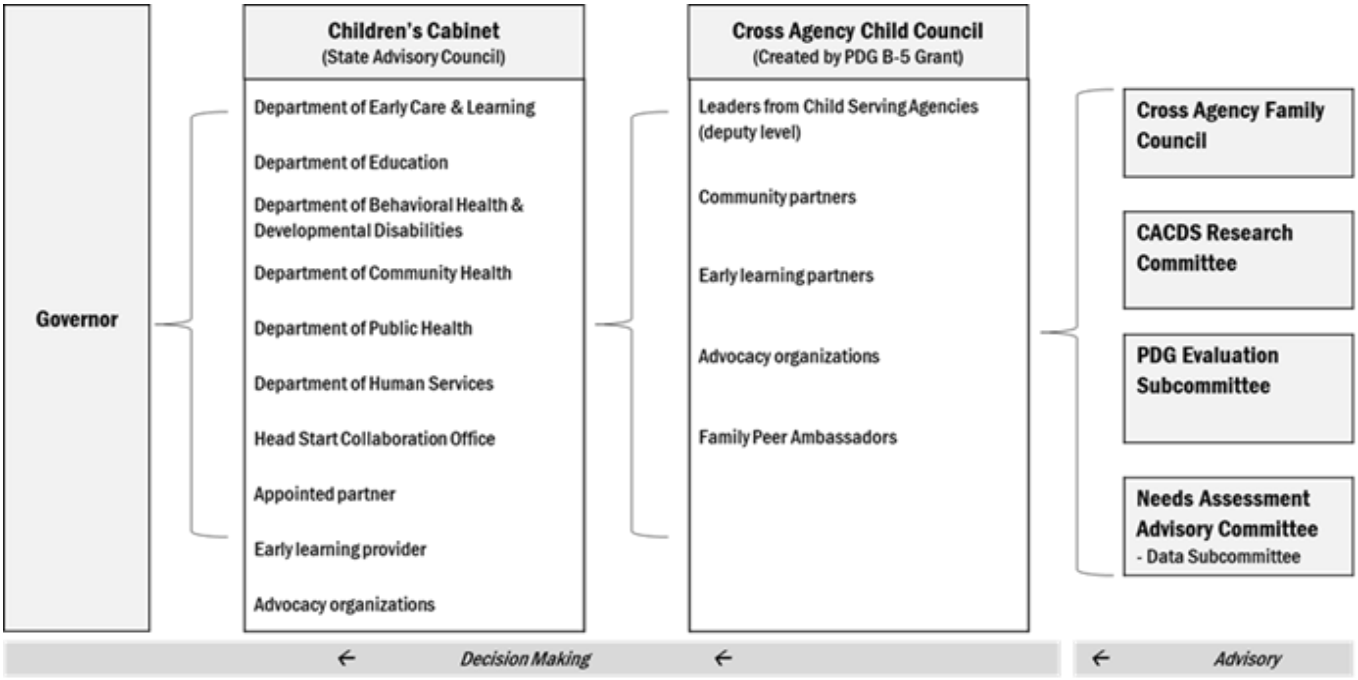
Once the Strategic Plan is finalized, the state will revisit and revise PPE outcomes to ensure they are aligned. The state will also identify any new outcomes and indicators. DECAL's Research and Policy Analysis team, in conjunction with PDG leadership and the CACC, will construct a "Project Performance Evaluation" logic model that incorporates the measures and milestones identified in other sections as well as the indicators constructed for the short and long-term outcomes. This will also inform any revisions to the PDG Logic Model.

Building on Progress from the Initial PDG B-5: State leaders have learned a great deal from the first year of Georgia's PDG B-5 Activities. This includes the findings from the NA about additional needs for collaboration and family support services. Based on these findings, the state is looking for greater opportunities for program alignment. This is evidenced in Georgia's Two-Generation approach, connecting work around student parents between DECAL and the Technical College System of Georgia; child care is an important need and the two agencies are aligning resources to support families. This work began before PDG B-5 but will be part of the PDG Strategic Planning Process. In September 2019 Georgia's DOE was also awarded an L4 grant; local communities will be able to apply for grants and include early education (specifically Quality Rated) as part of their applications. Part of Georgia's PDG B-5 Strategic Plan will include greater alignment and coordination. Georgia is also a recipient of a CCDBG Implementation Research and Evaluation Grant that has a focus on infant and toddlers, and the PDG B-5 developmental grant has provided opportunities to align those funds. The grants jointly fund a contract with Child Trends that connects research for both projects.

3. Meaningful Governance and Stakeholder Engagement

Georgia's PDG B-5 governance structure is woven into the fabric of its highly integrated system structure. There are two decision making entities: The Children's Cabinet and CACC. The chart

on the next page shows a map of the state's decision-making structure. The Governor appoints members to the Children's Cabinet (which serves as Georgia's State Advisory Council). Members of the CACC represent agency leadership. The NA Advisory Committee serves in an advisory capacity. In addition, the Cross Agency Family Council that will be created will inform the CACC. Managing grant activities and day-to-day decision making is led by DECAL, specifically in the Pre-K and Instructional Supports division.



The Governor's Children's Cabinet reviews PDG the strategic direction and approves reports and recommendations. The Cabinet includes: 1) all state agencies that serve the needs of Georgia's children from birth to age 18 and 2) select community, philanthropic, education, higher education, and business stakeholders. Cabinet membership conforms to the requirements for State Advisory Councils as prescribed in the Head Start Reauthorization Act of 2007. The Cabinet recommends policy and practice to improve outcomes for children and families in the areas of child welfare, economic assistance, health, juvenile justice, and education.

DECAL serves as the lead agency for PDG B-5 and houses multiple relevant federal and state programs. DECAL is headed by a Commissioner who is appointed by and reports directly to Georgia's Governor and who co-chairs the Cabinet. DECAL partners with key child- and family-serving agencies in order to carry out cross-sector PDG activities, as described in Activity One and Two. The chart below describes what each partner does.

State Agency	Description and Related Agency Programs
DBHDD	Oversees programs related to child and adolescent behavioral health. This includes family support services, a non-entitlement program which brokers disability specific services.
GaDOE	Oversees K-12 education, including ESSA, and oversees Georgia's IDEA Part B, Section 619, Literacy 4 Georgia Grants, and Title Programs.
DHS	Houses the Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS) which includes the foster care system and the Office of Preventation and Family Support. DHS is also responsible for administering TANF and SNAP.
DPH	Oversees Georgia's public health programs and initiatives such as Maternal Child Health, Children 1st, Women, Infant and Children Food and Nutrition Service, Idea Part C early intervention, Newborn Screening, and Home Visiting.
GOSA	Provides policy support to the Governor through research, data analysis, and reports on educational programs. Manages GA AWARDS, Georgia's P-20 statewide longitudinal data system.
TCSG	Supervises Georgia's 22 technical colleges on 85 campuses offering 600 program options including many for early educators.
USG	Governing organization for Georgia's 26 public colleges and universities.

Stakeholders Involved in the PDG Process

A diverse group of existing statewide stakeholder groups, representing a cross-section of many of the people in the table above, have been consulted in the PDG needs assessment and strategic planning process. These include the DECAL Advisory Committee, created in 2016 to provide advice on many of DECAL's policies and projects. It includes a cross-sector of members such as providers, families, and advocacy groups. Other state groups involved include the Get Georgia Reading Leadership Team; the Infant Toddler Coalition; the Georgia Essentials for Childhood

Steering Committee; Family Ambassadors; Georgia's Resource and Referral Network; and DECAL's Early Head Start – Child Care Partnership Policy Council.

Stakeholder and Role/Sector	**Activities**	**People**
Georgia Department of Early Care & Learning (child care licensing, CCDF, subsidy, Pre-K, QRIS, federal nutrition programs) – PDG Lead Agency	Needs Assess-ment (NA), Strategic Plan (SP), Implementation	*Susan Adams*, Pre-K & Instructional Supports Dep. Comm; *Bentley Ponder*, Quality Innovations & Partnerships Dep. Comm; *Elisabetta Kasfir*, Federal Programs Dep. Comm; *Denise Jenson*, Quality Rated Director; *Randy Hudgins*, Research & Policy Analysis Director, Allison Setterlind, Head Start Collaboration Office Director, & 25 more.
Georgia Department of Education (IDEA B 619, Migrant Education, K-12)	NA, SP, Data Sub-committee (Data)	*Catilin Dooley*, Deputy Superintendent for Teaching and Learning; *Zelphine Smith-Dixon*, Special Education Services & Supports Director; *Micole Talley*, Preschool Special Education Coordinator; *Omar Lopez-Nunez*, Migrant Education Program Research & Development Coordinator; *Kachelle White*, Special Education Services & Supports Sr. Program Manager,; *Eric McGhee*, McKinney-Vento Education for Homeless Children & Youth Grants Program Manager, & 14 more.
Georgia Department of Public Health (IDEA C, Home Visiting, Children 1st)	NA, SP, Data	*Jeannine Galloway*, Maternal & Child Health Director; *Kimberly Ross*, Early Brain Development & Language Acquisition Manager; *Twanna Nelson*, Home Visiting Director; *Florence Kizza*, Part C Data Manager; & 17 more.
Georgia Department of Human Services (foster care, et al.)	NA, SP, Data	*Deborah Chosewood*, Deputy Division Director-Prevention and Family Support, *Lindsey Dale*, Prevention & Community Support Program Specialist; *Donjai Calhoun*, Early Childhood Director; *Lamar Smith*, Well Being Services Director; *Nesha Jairam*, Data & Systems Manager, & 6 more.
Technical College System of Georgia	NA, SP	*Karen Howard*, Early Childhood Curriculum Program Specialist, & 2 more.
Governor's Office of Student Achievement (GA AWARDS P-20 SLDS)	NA, SP	*Joy Hawkins*, Executive Director; *Polina Aleshina*, Sr. Research Analyst; *David Evans*, GA AWARDS Data Warehouse/Business Intelligence Engineer; *Jackie Lundberg*, GA AWARDS Program Manager
Georgia Department of Community Affairs	NA, SP	*Grace Graszer*, Housing Policy Analyst, & 2 more

Stakeholder and Role/Sector	Activities	People
Georgia Department of Behavioral Health & Developmental Disability	NA, SP	*Dante McKay*, Office of Children, Young Adults, & Families Director
Georgia Children's Cabinet	NA, SP	*Amy Jacobs*, Georgia DECAL Commissioner; *Robyn A. Crittenden*, Georgia DHS Commissioner; *Tyrone Oliver*, Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice Commissioner; *Rachel Davidson*, Office of the Child Advocate Director; *Blake Tillery*, Georgia Senate; *Katie Dempsey*, Georgia House of Representatives; & 24 more
Office of the Governor	NA, SP	*Miranda Williams*, Governor's Education Policy Advisor
Child Care Providers	NA, SP	*Ellen Reynolds*, Georgia Child Care Association Executive Director; *Joe Perreault*, Public Policy Chair, Professional Family Child Care Alliance of Georgia; *Bill Powell*, Owner, Always Kids Child Care (Roswell); *Hows King*, Owner, Discovery Point (Cumming); *Jewell Moore*, CEO, First Steps Infant/Toddler Center (Vidalia); *Yiet Knight*, Director, Universal Child Care (Augusta); *Dayana Cross*, Mrs. Dayana's Home Daycare (Alpharetta), & 52 more
Advocacy Groups	NA, SP, Data	*Mindy Binderman*, Georgia Early Education Alliance for Ready Students Executive Director; *Melissa Haberlen DeWolf*, Voices for Georgia's Children Research & Policy Director; *Dana Rickman*, Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education VP, & 11 more.
CCR&R Agencies	NA, SP	*Soraya Miller*, Albany State University Director; *Gloria Calhoun*, Quality Care for Children Director, & 132 more.
Community Partners	NA, SP	*Ann Mintz*, Public Policy at United Way of Greater Atlanta Director; *Lara Robinson*, Centers for Disease Control & Prevention Behavioral Scientist; & 37 more.
ECE Training Institutions	NA, SP	*Noni Walton*, Training Coordinator; *Jennifer Cluley*, Associate Project Director, GSU Best Practices Training
Family Representatives	NA, SP	Willie R. (Atlanta); Alysia J. (Milledgeville); Jalila A. (Albany); Chinyere N. (Canton); & 37 more.
Head Start	NA, SP, Data	*Tanya Thomas*, Georgia Head Start Association President; *Teresa Johnson*, Enrichment Services Program Early Childhood & Family Services Director; *Cynthia Turner*, Coastal Plain Head Start Family & Community Manager, & 5 more.
Local School Systems	NA, SP	*Sydney Ahearn*, Atlanta Public Schools Early Learning Coordinator; *Noris Price*, Baldwin County Schools

Stakeholder and Role/Sector	Activities	People
		Superintendent; *Krystal Richter*, Henry County Schools Early Learning Coordinator; *Nick Chastain,* Colquitt County Board of Education Special Education Department Head, & 22 more.
Research Partners	NA, SP, Data	*Diane Early*, Child Trends Senior Research Scientist; *Gary Bingham*, Georgia State University Researcher, & 3 more.
University Partners	NA, SP, Data	*Japera Hemming*, Assistant Project Director, Georgia State University Georgia Policy Labs; *Stacey Neuharth-Pritchett*, University of Georgia Associate Dean for Academic Programs (College of Education), & 5 more.

Bonus – Coordinated Application, Eligibility, Enrollment

Georgia has an online integrated eligibility system – Georgia Gateway (gateway.ga.gov) – that provides a single point of entry for families applying to CAPS child care subsidy, Medicaid, PeachCare for Kids (Georgia's Child Health Insurance Program), SNAP, TANF, or WIC. This system provides an opportunity for greater alignment across these programs and the separate agencies that administer them. But since Gateway launched in 2017, all participating programs have received a high number of complaints from families experiencing difficulty navigating the system. Georgia proposes to do a study on user experience issues with the customer interface and how to redesign it to be more family friendly. Results of this study will be shared with the Cross Agency Child Council and the Gateway Executive Committee – composed of participating agency heads – for recommendations on how to address. The study is described below:

Time Frame	Activity
Y1: Q1	Identify independent contractor to design and conduct research. The study will encompass surveys and focus groups. While the focus will be on families, there may be a component that gauges providers' perceptions of how families are experiencing Gateway. There may also be an agency survey. DECAL will conduct a Market Rate Survey in 2020 which could be included in this contract.
Y1: Q2	Design study. This includes solidifying the research methodology, determining the sampling frame, and designing the focus group interview guide

Y1: Q3	Conduct family focus groups. Design survey instrument based on the initial findings from the focus groups. Determine survey sample size.
Y1: Q4	Finalize and Pilot Survey Instrument; Analyze and write focus group findings. Pull sample.
Y2: Q1	Conduct survey
Y2: Q2	Analyze survey results
Y2: Q3	Finalize results; present findings to the Cross Agency Child Council and agencies utilizing Gateway. Draft recommendations.
Y2:Q4	Finalize and present results to the Gateway Executive Committee

DECAL will be the lead agency for this study, in consultation with the Cross Agency Child Council and Gateway Executive Committee to inform the design and unpack the findings. Given the potential for the Gateway system to streamline eligibility and enrollment for families, this project is critical to improve access to services in five different state agencies and potentially impact millions of families. Additionally, there is a landscape study proposed in Activity 3 on how families access services and navigate the EECE system.

Bonus – Infant/Toddler Emphasis

In the last decade, DECAL has had an increased focus on quality in infant and toddler care. A 2008-2009 statewide study of child care quality[5] found low quality care for this age group in centers and family child care homes, with over two-thirds of infant and toddler classrooms rated low quality. Current state investments in infants and toddlers include an Infant Toddler Specialist Unit established ten years ago to raise classroom quality through technical assistance, a state Early Head Start – Child Care Partnership operating in five child care centers and 13 family child care learning homes, and Quality Rated Subsidy Grants that fund slots in programs that must raise quality for CAPS-eligible infants and toddlers.

Georgia's Needs Assessment identified infants and toddlers as an underserved focal population in need of targeted strategies. As discussed in Activity Five, Georgia proposes to pilot a family child care learning home network, with the goal to increase high-quality, home-based

choices for low-income families in rural areas and for parents with infants and toddlers. The following table lists several other projects that meet the criteria of this bonus section:

Project Description	Activity	Criteria Met in Bonus Section
Study to understand how families access ECCE services and resource and connect to community services	3	Identification and mitigation of developmental risk
Trauma-Informed Early Learning Collaboratives	4	Integration of two generation trauma-informed care.
DECAL Scholars Expansion	4	Better trained and more knowledgeable providers.
Coaching Designation	4	Network of infant and toddler coaches and mentors, Improved infant and toddler care; Better trained and more knowledgeable providers.
Quality Rated Revision	5	Improved infant and toddler care; Approaches that support parent infant toddler relationship.
Enhancing TA	5	Improved infant and toddler care; Better trained and more knowledgeable providers.
Community Grant	5	Improved infant and toddler care; Identification and mitigation of developmental risk.

Results will be tracked for each of these projects, as discussed in the activity descriptions.

Bonus - Collaborative Transition & Alignment from Birth to the Early Grades

In Georgia's RTT-ELC grant (2014-2018), the state made progress on transitions and alignment of services, including development of a Kindergarten Readiness Check and CACDS. The former facilitated alignment between early education and K-3. The latter provided data so that state and local leaders can better understand alignment, or lack thereof, of services. The activities described in Activity 3 support collaborative transitions for families in and out of the IDEA programs. As detailed in Activity 5, the project "Providing subgrants to local entities to enhance ECCE services" provides subgrants to communities to support them in developing specific solutions for their region. This will increase access to services and overall system level benefits. Communities will be funded to create cross-sector community collaboratives – which

will then focus on a critical population or a specific community need. Collaboratives will be required to focus on a specific focal population or initiative. There are two topics that specifically address collaborative transition and alignment from Birth to Early Grades. These are literacy development (transition) and mental health supports (alignment and access to services). The proposed project in Activity 6, revising CACDS to create CACDS 2.0, is also relevant to this bonus section. A key selling point for agencies to participate in CACDS has been the availability of data that inform the alignment of services, both statewide and for local communities. The revisions detailed in that section will incorporate changes to CACDS reports that better address transition. This is something that has been requested by local leaders, and these revisions will target addressing the needs. Additionally, cross sector (elementary school and child care program), community based trainings on using the system will be conducted and provide opportunities for joint planning for transitions.

Program Performance Evaluation Plan

Georgia's Program Performance Evaluation Plan (PPE) will be a critical part of the state's CQI plan. DECAL's Research and Policy Analysis team has a longstanding track record of conducting evaluations and using the results to drive change.

Measure inputs, activities, and outcomes. The PPE will utilize the Results Based Accountability Framework. For the inputs, activities, and outcomes in the Logic Model the state will create indicators or measures and DECAL will track progress towards them.

Use information to inform improvement, including refining the Needs Assessment and Logic Model. Georgia's PDG Leadership and the CACC will periodically review data from PPE and make revisions to the NA and Logic Model. Data will be tracked monthly or quarterly.

Improve data on an ongoing basis aligned with proposed metrics – and identify new data sources where needed. This will be an ongoing process, leveraging other areas where DECAL is seeking to improve data use – including its CCDBG Implementation Research and Evaluation Grant.

Manage data effectively and take advantage of existing data sources. DECAL will manage data related to PDG B-5 projects and is currently evaluating its data systems and processes.

Georgia has several data systems that will be used for the PPE. Licensing and QR data are housed in system designed and built by DECAL and therefore can be customized as needed. Pre-K and CAPS data are housed with external vendors, but the research team has access to these data system and run reports. Other agency data are embedded in CACDS.

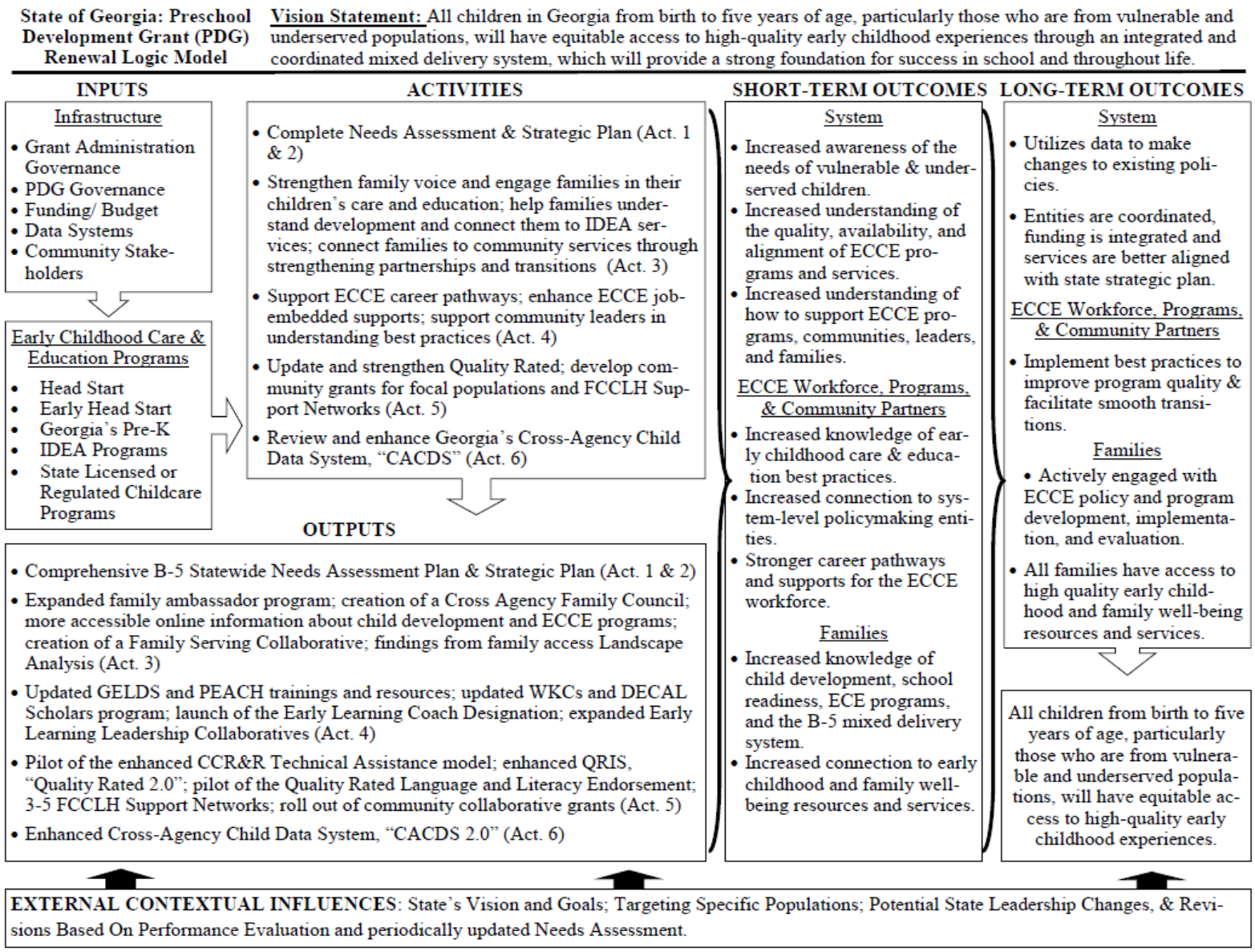
Use appropriate methodologies, including collecting data, measuring, and analyzing data. As the lead agency for PDG, DECAL will manage the data for the PPE and NA. DECAL will work with other state agencies to institute evaluation activities for the PDG B-5 projects. DECAL currently has a contract in place with Child Trends to support staff in "all things data."

Address potential obstacles. One obstacle is prioritizing and cataloging the abundance of administrative data. Georgia is developing a schedule for analyzing data. Another obstacle that the state is addressing is data literacy. DECAL has engaged in Data Literacy training and this is being incorporated into the CACDS data trainings.

Align the PPE with the vision and Needs Assessment. The PPE aligns with NA by utilizing similar data management and analysis strategies. The vision statement highlights access for children from vulnerable populations. DECAL has created reports, updated regularly, that can disaggregate data.

Assess processes. The PPE will track outcomes, create indicators, and develop process measures. A PDG Evaluation Subcommittee will meet twice a year to review evaluation findings.

Logic Model


State of Georgia: Preschool Development Grant (PDG) Renewal Logic Model
Vision Statement: All children in Georgia from birth to five years of age, particularly those who are from vulnerable and underserved populations, will have equitable access to high-quality early childhood experiences through an integrated and coordinated mixed delivery system, which will provide a strong foundation for success in school and throughout life.
INPUTS
Infrastructure
• Grant Administration Governance
• PDG Governance
• Funding/ Budget
• Data Systems
• Community Stakeholders
Early Childhood Care & Education Programs
• Head Start
• Early Head Start
• Georgia's Pre-K
• IDEA Programs
• State Licensed or Regulated Childcare Programs
ACTIVITIES
• Complete Needs Assessment & Strategic Plan (Act. 1 & 2)
• Strengthen family voice and engage families in their children's care and education; help families understand development and connect them to IDEA services; connect families to community services through strengthening partnerships and transitions (Act. 3)
• Support ECCE career pathways; enhance ECCE job-embedded supports; support community leaders in understanding best practices (Act. 4)
• Update and strengthen Quality Rated; develop community grants for focal populations and FCCLH Support Networks (Act. 5)
• Review and enhance Georgia's Cross-Agency Child Data System, "CACDS" (Act. 6)
OUTPUTS
• Comprehensive B-5 Statewide Needs Assessment Plan & Strategic Plan (Act. 1 & 2)
• Expanded family ambassador program; creation of a Cross Agency Family Council; more accessible online information about child development and ECCE programs; creation of a Family Serving Collaborative; findings from family access Landscape Analysis (Act. 3)
• Updated GELDS and PEACH trainings and resources; updated WKCs and DECAL Scholars program; launch of the Early Learning Coach Designation; expanded Early Learning Leadership Collaboratives (Act. 4)
• Pilot of the enhanced CCR&R Technical Assistance model; enhanced QRIS, "Quality Rated 2.0"; pilot of the Quality Rated Language and Literacy Endorsement; 3-5 FCCLH Support Networks; roll out of community collaborative grants (Act. 5)
• Enhanced Cross-Agency Child Data System, "CACDS 2.0" (Act. 6)
SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES
System
• Increased awareness of the needs of vulnerable & underserved children.
• Increased understanding of the quality, availability, and alignment of ECCE programs and services.
• Increased understanding of how to support ECCE programs, communities, leaders, and families.
ECCE Workforce, Programs, & Community Partners
• Increased knowledge of early childhood care & education best practices.
• Increased connection to system-level policymaking entities.
• Stronger career pathways and supports for the ECCE workforce.
Families
• Increased knowledge of child development, school readiness, ECE programs, and the B-5 mixed delivery system.
• Increased connection to early childhood and family well-being resources and services.
LONG-TERM OUTCOMES
System
• Utilizes data to make changes to existing policies.
• Entities are coordinated, funding is integrated and services are better aligned with state strategic plan.
ECCE Workforce, Programs, & Community Partners
• Implement best practices to improve program quality & facilitate smooth transitions.
Families
• Actively engaged with ECCE policy and program development, implementation, and evaluation.
• All families have access to high quality early childhood and family well-being resources and services.
All children from birth to five years of age, particularly those who are from vulnerable and underserved populations, will have equitable access to high-quality early childhood experiences.
EXTERNAL CONTEXTUAL INFLUENCES: State's Vision and Goals; Targeting Specific Populations; Potential State Leadership Changes, & Revisions Based On Performance Evaluation and periodically updated Needs Assessment.

Project Sustainability Plan

Georgia is committed to sustaining the PDG B-5 approaches in this grant well beyond the funding period and has woven the proposed activities into the fabric of the ECCE system. Georgia plans to sustain the work by: 1) Embedding grant work into the existing state system by leveraging key staff, existing partners, and funding; 2) Developing achievable projects and activities that align with current state programs and initiatives that can be completed within the grant timeframe and sustained; and 3) Focusing the grant activities on expanding the progress made in previous grant opportunities at both the state and community level.

One strategy is to continue utilizing Georgia's existing ECCE system by leveraging existing leadership structures. Specifically, Georgia's will be able to sustain many projects and activities proposed in this grant application through leadership collaboration across state agencies at multiple levels. As outlined in *Organizational Management and Capacity*, Georgia's work is led by DECAL and championed at the state executive level by the well-established Georgia's Children's Cabinet. The initial PDG augmented this structure with the creation of the CACC, which will continue to lead and facilitate implementation of the Strategic Plan and ongoing NA. Partnerships established through the Cross-Agency Child Council will help in sustaining projects that include staff from across agencies. One of the successes of the Georgia's RTT-ELC grant has been the relationships established (e.g. – CACDS Executive Committee) and PDG B-5 will provide similar opportunities. Leveraging leaders within child serving agencies is critical, because leaders at the deputy commissioner and director level often remain in place when agency heads change. Key existing state agency staff will also lead and support the grant and provide continuity through their knowledge of and experience with the state's early education programs, policies, and culture – and their relationships. As noted above, state agencies also have

significant authority to address policy barriers through their administration of programs, making the need to change laws rare.

A second strategy is to leverage current funding streams, especially in terms of staff. To keep expenditures down and embed activities in the ECCE system, PDG B-5 funds will only be used for four staff positions: PDG Executive Lead, Grant Director, Grant Coordinator, and Data Analyst. Existing staff are expert in leveraging current state and federal funding streams and will continue to blend those funds with PDG B-5 funding to support Activities being sustained after the grant period ends. For example, staff have experience with the federal Early Head Start – Child Care Partnerships grant, which promoted understanding of opportunities to layer CAPS funding and other sources of dollars to enhance the quality of care for infants and toddlers in working families. Additionally, utilizing federal funds (CCDF and IDEA Part B) GaDOE and DECAL share a position that works on positive behavior support alignment opportunities between the two agencies. This position has helped sustain work generated during RTT-ELC and this will be explored for PDG B-5 sustainability.

A third strategy to support sustainability has been to develop projects and activities that can be completed within the grant timeframe but with continuing structures and benefits. Each activity was carefully designed to ensure completion with enough time to revise plans based on the final NA results and the Strategic Plan. Sufficient support and resources, including contractual data and evaluation partners, meeting facilitators, and subject matter experts, were included in the budget to support this goal. On-going updates to the NA (as discussed in Activity 1) will help determine any rules or requirements that may be negatively impacting collaboration.

Georgia's proposal builds on progress made through previous federal grants and strategic state investments. At the state level, Georgia will be revising, strengthening and expanding

existing systems created through previous RTT-ELC and PDG B-5 grant opportunities – including CACDS, QR, DECAL Scholars, and the Family Ambassador Network. Georgia will continue to build on the lessons learned from the ELC grant by piloting specific grant activities in targeted communities serving vulnerable children and families identified through the PDG B-5 initial grant. This strategy allows the state to leverage local funds and resources to support the grant work. Much of the K-12 funding, including ESSA, is allocated to local school districts and will be leveraged at the local level to support and align the PDG B-5 activities into existing ECE community initiatives. Additional funding opportunities include Georgia's recently awarded L4GA Grant (Described in Activity 6) that will provide school systems with additional funding to incorporate early learning strategies.

In terms of sustainability, the state has identified additional efficiencies that can help sustain PDG B-5 projects. Georgia's Early Head Start – Child Care Partnerships have been able to raise quality for many programs serving infants and toddlers through the combination of EHS and CCDF funds. This benefits more children than those who are receiving EHS services. Another example would be how the state develops new PD opportunities by utilizing state (Georgia's Pre-K) and federal (CCDF) funds.

Dissemination Plan

Georgia's Dissemination Plan has the following four goals: 1) Relevant audiences will understand grant outputs related to their role in the ECCE system; 2) Target audiences will be able to share their feedback on those outputs in real time; 3) Target audiences will feel empowered and equipped to act in their unique roles based on what they have learned; and, 4) Dissemination efforts will be evaluated to determine the extent to which target audiences have received project information and have used it as intended.

The Dissemination Plan leverages existing state cross agency groups, advisory groups, coalitions, and community networks to reach target audiences. One key responsibility of the members of these groups will be to disseminate ongoing progress of the grant activities to their respective audiences, communities, and constituencies, and to bring feedback back to CACC. See chart below for partners, strategies, and timelines.

Target Audience	Dissemination Partners/Strategies	Timeline
State agencies	Provide updates to Children's Cabinet, CACC, State Agency Boards, Interagency Coordinating Council, Get Georgia Reading Executive Cabinet	Quarterly
ECCE Providers	DECAL PDG B-5 Webinars and Program Newsletters. DECAL will use Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Pinterest, and a new "DECAL Download" podcast. Additionally, the CCR&Rs distribute a quarterly newsletter that DECAL provides content. DECAL also publishes a quarterly newsletter for trainers.	Quarterly (webinars & newsletters) Ongoing (social media)
Families and Community Leaders, including Focal Populations	Leverage the networks and stakeholders by engaging the Cross Agency Family Advisory, Georgia Infant and Toddler Coalition. DECAL webinars and social media strategies listed above	Ongoing
Advocates and other stakeholders	Engage and contract with an ECCE community partner to draw on existing networks to digitally distribute NA, Strategic Plan, and other reports (social media, blog posts, newsletters), engage media and pull together statewide community meetings.	Ongoing

Georgia will track the implementation of the Dissemination Plan in two ways. DECAL has a dedicated Communications Team that will not only help produce social media and online content, but also will collect and monitor digital analytics to understand the reach of the material to the target audiences. In addition, DECAL will require its contracted partner to engage a research entity to evaluate the extent to which target audiences have received project information and have used it as intended. Finally, part of the QR revision (See Activity 5) includes developing communication strategies and marketing materials for any revisions.

Finally, Georgia will host quarterly webinars for stakeholders not able to participate in the in-person advisory sessions can be engaged and to share learning with other states. The webinars will also be posted on the DECAL website.

Project Budget and Budget Justification

Presented below is the budget narrative for DECAL's PDG B-5 renewal proposal. The total proposed budget for grant is $5,944,927 for the budget period. DECAL will utilize existing state funding and in-kind support in the amount of $1,783,478 to meet the required match portion of the proposed grant. Therefore, the **total amount of federal funding required for the proposed budget is $4,161,449.**

Personnel – A senior executive position with an estimated salary of $110,000 will dedicate 100% of their time to providing state-level executive leadership to the project vision and manage the Cross-Agency Child Council. A Grant Director with an estimated annual salary of $63,000 and a Grant Coordinator with a salary of $49,457 will dedicate 100% of their time executing and coordinating grant activities according the implementation plan and budget strategy. A Senior Research and Policy Analyst with an estimate annual salary of $66,463 will dedicate 100% of their time providing expert support grant activities. The annual salaries listed for each proposed FTE are for filled positions or are consistent with similar roles currently within DECAL. The total personnel budget proposed is $288,920.

Fringe – The total rate of fringes for DECAL employees is calculated at a rate of 63.211% of the current salary. This breaks down as follows: FICA is 7.650%, Health Insurance is 30.781%, and Retirement is 24.78%. All rates are set by the State of Georgia. The total fringe budget proposed is $182,628.

Travel – Out of state travel is required for one multi-night trip to Washington, D.C. for four DECAL employees. **Each trip is estimated to be for three nights and three days of travel and will include $200 for airfare, $900 ($300 x 3 nights) for hotel accommodations, $165 ($55 x 3 days) for meals and $50 for local travel expenses for a total of $1,315 for each employee for the trip. The total travel budget proposed is $5,260.**

Equipment – $2,500 is proposed for one FTE included in the grant for equipment to account for one computer, associated peripheral items, and a mobile device for the employee. The amount proposed is based on the cost of similar equipment utilized within DECAL. The total equipment budget proposed is $2,500.

Supplies - $500 per proposed FTE is included for office supplies for a total of $2,000. $8,000 is estimated to be needed in order to provide the necessary supplies and materials for stakeholder meetings for the grant activities. For estimating the need for supplies and materials for participants we anticipate needing $20 per participant per meeting day. **Activity 1, 2, and 6** will have 4 total meeting days for 50 participants at an estimate cost of $4,000. Activity 3 will have 4

total meeting days for 50 participants at an estimate cost of $4,000. DECAL estimates that annual printing needs will total $15,000. The total supplies budget proposed is $25,000.

Contractual – DECAL intends to procure contracts as a primary means of supporting and executing the vision of the activities outlined in the grant proposal. All contract amounts proposed are based upon the agency's extensive experience procuring services to support our agency mission. $25,000 for state-level facilitation services performed by the Carl Vinson Institute of Government for **Activities 1 and 2**. $100,000 for data and research support from Child Trends for **Activities 1, 2, and 6**. $260,000, including $60,000 of in-kind support from Satcher, for Smart and Secure Children Training for **Activity 3**. $10,000 for the Parent Café training content and delivery for **Activity 3**. $36,800 for services to provide peer family ambassador stipend payments for **Activity 3**. $100,000 for services to perform focus groups, interview, and surveys to assess and understand how families connect to ECCE services and programs for **Activity 3**. $175,000 for translation services for the developmental milestones website for **Activity 3**. $200,000 for enhancing licensing report website for **Activity 3**. $130,000 for community two-generation grants for two grants of $45,500, including $10,500 in-kind support, and two grants of $19,500, including $4,500 in-kind support, for **Activity 3**. $78,000 for early learning leadership grants in 6 communities for an average grant of $13,000, including $3,000 in-kind support, for **Activity 4**. $290,000 to support alternate career pathways in the DECAL Scholars Program for **Activity 4**. $200,000 to perform a validation study of the DECAL Scholars Program for **Activity 4**. $200,000 for the development and training related to GELDS for **Activity 4**. $100,000 to redesign and enhance the PEACH online lesson planning tool for **Activity 4**. $10,000 for updating standards for Workforce, Knowledge and Competencies for **Activity 4**. $1,446,000 to enhance workforce professional development opportunities by offer training and associated substitute funding for 40 teachers to obtain a relationship-based coaching designation for $54,000 and provide stipends to those coaches to offer training opportunities to other teachers for $92,000 while building upon $1,300,000 in current state spending for best practices training to support relationship-based coaching professional development activities for **Activity 4**. $180,000 for Trauma Informed Care training for **Activity 4**. $100,000 for technical assistance related to continuous quality improvement efforts for the state's CCR&R's for **Activity 5**. $195,000, including $45,000 in-kind support, to implement a Family Child Care Learning Home Network pilot program. $390,000 for focal population community grants for six grants of $45,500, including $10,500 in-kind support, and six grants of $19,500, including $4,500 in-kind support, for **Activity 5**. $120,000 for monitoring and evaluation of the focal population community grants for **Activity 5**. $150,000 to work with a higher education partner to develop and pilot a Language and Literacy Endorsement for QRIS programs for **Activity 5**. $30,000 for facilitation services related to DECAL's proposed QRIS revision and engagement for **Activity 5**. $500,000 for planning and technical consulting services to continue developing the Cross-Agency Child Data System for **Activity 6**. $75,000 to work with a state advocacy partner to market and disseminate grant activity outcomes for the Dissemination Plan. $120,000 to facilitate focus groups, interviews, and surveys for both families and providers to evaluate the state's eligibility and enrollment processes for Coordinated Application, Eligibility, Enrollment. **The total contractual budget proposed is $5,220,800**.

Other – $1,670 per FTE is included for office space rent for a total of $6,680. $96,000 is estimated to be needed in order to provide the meeting space for stakeholder meetings for the grant activities. For estimating the need for meeting space for participants we anticipate needing $150 per participant per meeting day. **Activity 1, 2, and 6** will have 4 total meeting days for 50 participants at an estimated cost of $30,000. **Activity 3** will have 4 total meeting days for 50 participants at an estimated cost of $30,000. **Activity 4** will have 6 total training days for 40 participants at an estimated cost of $36,000. $58,278 for training and technical assistance needs and is based on 1% of the proposed direct cost of $5,827,788 for the grant. The total other budget proposed is $160,838.

Indirect – The total indirect is $58,861 and is equal to one percent of the total proposed cost for direct activities as well as training and technical assistance.

Georgia has allocated $350,000, 6.1 % of the total budget, to refine and implement the PPE. This includes $100,000 from a contract with Child Trends to provide on-going support for data management, data collection, and implementation. It also includes $250,000 from a contract for implementation reporting and data system planning for CACDS in Activity 6.

DECAL intends to meet the 30% cost sharing or matching requirement in the amount of $1,783,478 by utilizing a combination of existing state investment, available state funding, and in-kind support by grantees and partners in each of the 3 years of the grant. In Activity 4, DECAL will leverage $1,300,000 in existing state investment in workforce professional development. In Activity 3 and 5, DECAL will leverage in-kind support from training and support partners in the amount of $105,000. In Activity 3, 4, and 5, DECAL will leverage in-kind support provided by communities that are awarded grant opportunities in the amount of $138,000. DECAL also intends to commit existing state funds in the amount of $240,478 that are available and accessible that will allow for the cost sharing and match requirements to be met throughout the grant period without sacrificing the vision of the grant in each of the three years of the grant.

Summary by Budget Category	Amount
Personnel	$288,920
Fringes	$182,628
Travel	$5,260
Equipment	$2,500
Supplies	$25,000
Contractual*	$5,220,800
Construction	$0
Other	$160,958
Total Direct	$5,886,066
Indirect	$58,861
Total Budget	$5,944,927
State & In-Kind Match	$1,783,478
Federal Request	$4,161,449
Total Budget	$5,944,927

Summary by Activity	Amount
Organizational Management	$724,127
Activity 1**	$14,000
Activity 2**	$36,000
Activity 3	$911,800
Activity 4	$2,504,000
Activity 5	$985,000
Activity 6**	$575,000
Dissemination Plan	$75,000
Integrated Eligibility & Enrollment	$120,000
Total Direct	$5,944,927

*PPE: contractual includes $350,000, 6.1 % of the total budget.

**Activities 1, 2, & 6 include contractual amounts supporting the PPE.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Program Support Center
Financial Management Service
Division of Cost Allocation

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JUN 09 2014

Mr. H. Ray Higgins, Jr.
Deputy Commissioner
Finance and Administration
Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning
2 Martin Luther King Jr. Drive, SE, Suite 754 East Tower
Atlanta, GA 30334

Dear Mr. Higgins:

This letter provides approval of the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning Cost Allocation Plan (Plan), submitted on December 28, 2012. The effective date of the Plan is July 1, 2012.

Acceptance of the actual costs in accordance with the approved Plan is subject to the following conditions:

1. The information contained in the Plan and provided by the State in connection with our review of the Plan is complete and accurate in all material respects.

2. The actual costs claimed by the State are allowable under prevailing cost principles, program regulations and law.

3. The claims conform with the administrative and statutory limitations against which they are made.

This approval relates only to the methods of identifying and allocating costs to programs, and nothing contained herein should be construed as approving activities not otherwise authorized by approved program plans or Federal legislation and regulations.

Implementation of the approved cost allocation plan may subsequently be reviewed by authorized Federal staff. The disclosure of inequities during reviews may require changes to the Plan.

If you have any questions concerning the contents of this letter, please contact Jill Wilson of my staff at (301)-492-4881.

Sincerely,

Arif Karim, Director
Cost Allocation Services

cc: Jackie Glaze, CMS
Nadine Roth, ACF
Francisco Lebron, FNS