



October 14, 2014

The Honorable Arne Duncan
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Ave. SW
Washington, D.C. 20202

The Honorable Sylvia M. Burwell
The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Ave., S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Secretaries Duncan and Burwell:

It is my honor to present the Massachusetts Federal Preschool Expansion Grant proposal. On behalf of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, I wish to thank you and President Obama for the essential leadership that you have provided in establishing early learning as a top national priority.

Massachusetts is grateful for this opportunity, which would build on nearly a decade of progress under the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care and our Race to the Top - Early Learning Challenge Grant. Notwithstanding some of our successes in education and child well-being, Massachusetts is motivated by our recognition that achieving our ideal of providing all children with their full measure of opportunity is a constant pursuit from which we can never retire.

The Federal Preschool Expansion Grant has inspired Massachusetts to think boldly and to offer a plan that engages and leverages the strengths of the Massachusetts mixed-delivery system to reach more children and advances our goal of achieving a universally-accessible, high-quality system of early education and care.

Thank you for your consideration and for lending your powerful voices to our most powerless children.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Thomas L. Weber'.

Thomas L. Weber
Commissioner
Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care

SECTION A: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts (MA) has long-recognized both the necessity and the wisdom of investing in its youngest residents. From John Adam's authoring of the right to a free public education in our State Constitution, Horace Mann's creation of the modern American public school model, our groundbreaking adoption of standards-based education in 1993, and the creation of the first-in-the-nation consolidated Department of Early Education and Care (DEEC) in 2005, Massachusetts has prioritized its children and committed to the ideals of constant innovation and perpetual improvement. We are proud of our #1 ranking among the states in child well-being as rated by the 2014 Annie E. Casey Foundation's KidsCount program. However, we are aware of, and motivated by, how much more progress remains if we are to provide all children with the full measure of opportunity that they deserve and we owe them as a Commonwealth.

Notwithstanding some of our successes, Massachusetts families face the same economic challenges as many other states, including the new economic realities of globalization and the slowness of our exit from the Great Recession (*The Cornerstones of Economic Security for Resilient Workers*, National Governors Association, April 2013; *Education and Workforce Preparedness*, MA Business Alliance for Education, August 14, 2014). Families with young children, especially those in high-need communities, face the acute challenge of accessing one of the nation's most expensive early education and care systems, and, once there, finding high-quality services (*Parents and the High Costs of Child Care*, Child Care Aware of America, 2013).

Our most vulnerable families include those living with limited income, some in deep multi-generational poverty, whose daily lives are characterized by significant housing instability, health and mental health needs, nutrition challenges and the now well-known impact of chronic trauma, toxic stress and adverse childhood experiences. Our military, refugee and immigrant families also face many of these same challenges. For all of these populations with young children, access to high-quality preschool represents both a common need and an immensely effective public policy to stabilize the family and advance both child and parent well-being.

The National Center for Children in Poverty reports that in 2012 there were 317,692 families with 429,609 children ages five and younger in the Commonwealth, 32% of whom lived in families with income below 200% of the federal poverty level. Six in ten of these children (61%) lived with a single parent and four in ten (39%) had at least one parent who is employed either part-year or part-time. More than eight in ten (85%) of MA young children whose mothers and/or fathers have not completed high school live in low-income families. Even among young children whose parents have a high school degree but no post-secondary education, more than six in ten (63%) live in low-income families. These same data point out troubling inequities by race and ethnicity as well. Twenty percent (20%) of young white children and 25% of Asian children live in low-income families, as compared with 57% of African American and 67% of Hispanic families.

These trends carry over into children's educational performance as well. Massachusetts recently released results from the 2013 Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS), our statewide student assessment program. The overall third grade reading performance is troubling enough, with 43% of children scoring below proficient, but the performance of low-income children is even more alarming with a staggering 61% below proficiency. Massachusetts can, and must, do more to engage and support children, especially vulnerable populations, during the critical years preceding kindergarten.

A recent report by the MA Budget and Policy Center estimates that one third of MA families living below 200% of the federal poverty level "receive no public support for their preschool children." The Center reports that statewide, about 51,000 preschoolers live in low-income families and 19,000 receive no public support. Lacking data on only four-year olds, we estimate that three and four-year olds constitute an equal part of these 19,000 children, suggesting that the total cohort of four-year olds eligible for enrollment in a High Quality Preschool Program would be about 9,500.

With this grant award, DEEC will take an additional, significant step forward to advancing access to Eligible Children (EC) in High Quality Preschool Programs (HQPPs) in MA. The plan builds upon other investments in early education and care, made over time and as recently as the present State Fiscal Year (FY). Most importantly, the plan engages all elements of the Massachusetts mixed-delivery system of early education and care, an unprecedented coordination of partners and resources that builds on momentum achieved at both the state and community levels over the past decade.

Our Plan in Brief

Five Commonwealth High-Need (HN) Communities have enthusiastically agreed to partner with DEEC in this work: Boston, Holyoke, Lawrence, Lowell and Springfield. [D(1-3)] The public school district (LEA) in each community will serve as the Subgrantee, supported in the delivery of services by at least two Early Learning Providers (ELPs) in each community (12 total) and a DEEC-led statewide coalition of state agencies. In the first year of the grant, we will enroll ~750 eligible four-year old children across the districts through a local investment of \$14,250,000 in Preschool Expansion grant funds. Over the four years of this grant award, we will serve a total of ~3,000 additional children (750 each year) living in families below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL).

While all ELPs serving these children will meet the 12 required HQPP standards, this funding will also significantly advance preschool quality and early education/public preschool partnerships within each of the five HN Communities. It will enable the Commonwealth to better meet the needs of each community's vulnerable families through improved outreach, access and coordination of comprehensive services, assuring that young children's development is supported and advanced in their home environments, as well as in their preschool settings. As the state continues to move to performance-based contracting, we will expand our use of evidence-based practice (EBP) while fostering innovation at the community level, and we will develop and share knowledge through continued formative assessment, as well as benchmarking outcomes through indicators such as attendance, preschool suspensions, school readiness, third grade reading proficiency, and family engagement.

Finally, DEEC and our state agency and local partners will continue to make community and systems-wide improvements that advance the effectiveness and efficiency of the MA Birth-Third Grade (B-3) policy agenda and provide a comprehensive service continuum for all children. Strategies supported through this grant opportunity will include data development and sharing, continued refinement and expansion of our Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS), systematic improvements in workforce development and support, and expanded cross-agency co-training. Developing innovative strategies to assure both sustainability and continued expansion of this work will begin immediately (e.g., through ongoing FY16 state budget planning, related grant management and alignment activities, and Social Innovation Financing (SIF) opportunities that will become available this fall).

In order to ensure that this initiative is not solely supported by the federal government, MA is able to devote almost \$6M, the equivalent of almost 40% of our possible award, to support our effort to expand high quality preschool opportunities. In each case we have worked to adhere to federal guidelines regarding criteria for matching and as a result we can offer state funding shown below to support this initiative.

\$1,000,000 from new, state-funded K-1 grant program [B(2)] designed to support the establishment and improvement of preschool programs. These funds will be used both to fund new preschool classrooms and to improve quality in existing classrooms.
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\$200,000 from the state's Child Care Quality Grant Program which is directly funded by receipts from the Commonwealth's "Invest in Children" license plates. This grant funds a number of quality improvements at programs in the Commonwealth.
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\$2,938,987 as a result of state funded preschool age placements in our income eligible subsidy program which is a targeted effort to reduce our waitlist. This is the preschool aged portion of a \$15M increase in funding to support placements for children awaiting subsidies.

\$1,851,089 as a result of state-funded preschool age placements in our supportive program for
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children involved with the state's Department of Children and Families (DCF). This is the preschool portion of new supportive placements for these children.

Each of these sources (with the exception of the citizen-funded Child Care Quality Grant Program) have seen increases with support from both Governor Patrick and the MA Legislature in recent years. These funds represent Competitive Priority #1.

Seven goals along with a first set of Year I core activities serve as the foundation for our plan. These are summarized below and are woven throughout this application.

Goal #1: *Expand Development of Mixed-Service Partnerships in the 5 High Need*

Communities in an unprecedented effort to deliver high-quality preschool programming, and inform and advance state and local policies and programming.

Key Activities (Year I):

- Within 90 days of grant award, establish signed DEEC-LEA MOUs, present to community stakeholders, and create individual community plans for DEEC approval;
- Inform key legislative, policy leaders across branches of government at the state and community levels. Establish the statewide Preschool Expansion Program (PEP) interagency guiding group; and
- With each LEA, present the PEP plan to community providers, including those funded by DEEC, and others that provide comprehensive services to vulnerable families.

Responsible Parties: DEEC, the LEA, identified DEEC-licensed ELPs, and any other programs identified in the community plan.

Goal #2: *Expand Preschool Access* as outlined in this Plan

Key Activities (Year I):

- Establish LEA-ELP leadership and program team members; review and accept community plans; and
- Expand preschool access to accommodate the September 2015 entry of the first cohort

of 750 four-year olds across the five communities.

Responsible Parties: DEEC, the LEA, identified DEEC-licensed ELPs, and any other programs identified in the community plan.

Goal #3: *Support Strong Family Engagement in Each LEA Community*

Key Activities (Year I):

- Prioritize and enhance time and resources to support parents and families as their children's first teachers and as critical stakeholders in the work of child development, school readiness and early school success; and
- Explicitly identify the family engagement goals and strategies that align with, and leverage, ongoing DEEC-sponsored community and family engagement activities, in both the MOUs and community plans.

Responsible Parties: DEEC, the LEA, and identified DEEC-licensed ELPs.

Goal #4: *Comprehensive Services* to assure that these children and their families receive the services that they need to support the children's health development, school readiness, and early school success, including housing, nutrition, and employment training and opportunities.

Key Activities (Year I):

- Explicitly identify in the community plans how the LEAs, DEEC-licensed ELPs, and related programs will deliver comprehensive services to the children and families served by the MA Preschool Expansion plan; and
- Begin direct service delivery of comprehensive services by September 2015 or no later than December 2015.

Responsible Parties: DEEC, the LEA, identified DEEC-licensed ELPs, and any other programs identified in the community plan.

Goal #5: *Program Quality and Child Outcome Improvement* to improve and sustain the quality of early education and care programs in accord with the 12 components of High Quality Preschool Programs (HQPPs) and develop knowledge linkages between program performance and child outcomes.

Key Activities (Year I):

- DEEC will hire a Preschool Expansion Project Director and establish an Interagency Advisory Group, led by DEEC and comprised of representatives of DESE and DHE, that will oversee development of, and establish procedures for, HQPP [C(2)] ;
- LEAs and ELPs will self-assess to identify systemic changes that can be made to better support program quality [C(2)];
- PEP Director will begin convening Professional Learning Communities to identify challenges, problem-solve, and identify and disseminate best practices [C(2)];
- DEEC will work with LEAs and ELPs to assign State Student Identification numbers (SASIDs) to participating children [C(2)];
- DEEC Program Quality Specialists will support LEAs and ELPs through the MA QRIS program quality standards and verification process [C(2)]; and
- Building on the SASID assignment, DEEC, LEAs, and ELPs will commence formative and direct assessment of participating children and initiate a jointly-funded longitudinal study of the Preschool Expansion Program [C(3)].

Responsible Parties: DEEC, the LEA, and identified DEEC-licensed ELPs.

Goal #6: *Workforce Development* to support the recruitment and retention of a highly skilled early education workforce with competitive compensation and opportunities for co-training with professionals from other sectors also serving these families.

Key Activities (Year (I):

- Identify and, if necessary, hire BA-credentialed and state certified lead educators for Preschool Expansion classrooms;
- As part of the community plan, establish an educator compensation package comparable to the local LEA; and
- Jointly identify and hire Master Teachers to provide preschool teachers with coaching, mentoring, curriculum guidance and support.

Responsible Parties: DEEC, the LEA, and identified DEEC-licensed ELPs.

Goal #7: *Responsibly manage the implementation of this \$15M process through improved Data Development and Use*

DEEC will develop and use data to; (a) Inform strategic planning; (b) Expand continuous quality improvement; (c) Track children's age-appropriate development B-3, school readiness and elementary school success (including the incidence of suspensions and expulsions, changes in attendance, and improvements in reading proficiency at the end of 3rd grade); (d) Improve family engagement, and (e) Provide for regular public reporting and accountability.

Key Activities (Year I):

- Assess the data capabilities of the five communities and ensure capacity to meet the program quality and child outcome requirements of the MA Preschool Expansion Plan;
- Standardize to the greatest extent possible across the five communities the manner and method of data collection, leveraging the DEEC Early Childhood Information System (ECIS), the MA State Longitudinal Data System (SLDS), and supplementing these systems as necessary [F(1-2)];
- Improve data collection and practice in the community plan and ensure that data plays a critical role in the five LEA-ELP Learning Communities [E(2)];
- Assess and share best practices across the DEEC-licensed system of more than 10,000 programs as well as the Commonwealth's community of LEAs through DEEC and community reporting requirements [E(4)]; and
- Provide comprehensive reports to stakeholders and policymakers through, but not limited to, the DEEC annual legislative report and monthly updates to the Board of Early Education and Care.

Responsible Parties: DEEC, the LEA, and identified DEEC-licensed ELPs.

To accomplish these goals, we will employ a set of cross-cutting processes, tools and investments developed over the past decade and coordinate them at unprecedented levels for the maximum benefit of children and families served. These include:

- Massachusetts Early Learning and Development Standards
- Birth through Third Grade Framework to guide transitions and alignment

- An Early Learning Assessment Framework for Children, including school readiness and third grade reading expectations
- The Massachusetts QRIS, DEEC Licensing, and related Program Quality Standards
- Massachusetts Early Education Workforce Initiative
- Family and Community Engagement Supports and Investment
- Inclusion Standards and Outreach Strategies
- Strong Cross-Agency Partnerships and resource collaboration
- The Massachusetts Early Childhood Information System
- Massachusetts *Brain Building in Progress* public education and advocacy campaign.

(A)(1) Progress to Date

Massachusetts is one of just three states with an early childhood education department. The MA Department of Early Education and Care (DEEC) was established in law in 2005 with the statutory charge of creating a comprehensive early education and care system to advance the well-being of Massachusetts' children, with a special lens on those most vulnerable. Over the last three years (2011-2014), the Department's accomplishments have resulted in increased budgetary resources, rising from \$482M in 2011 to the current budget of \$545M for the current state fiscal year [B(2)]. Evidence of the Commonwealth's commitment to investing in the early years can be seen in a 13% increase in funding categories specific to purposes of this Preschool Expansion Grant Application over the period SFY11-15.

The DEEC is also part of a newly-aligned, B-20 Massachusetts Education Secretariat. In 2008, MA established the Executive Office of Education (EOE) to "...improve achievement for all students, close persistent achievement gaps, and to create a 21st century public education system that prepares students for higher education, work and life in a world economy and global society." Included within EOE are the Departments and Boards of DEEC, Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and Higher Education (DHE), as well the University of Massachusetts and its Board of Trustees.

In recognition of the Commonwealth's commitment to education reform, DESE was awarded a Race to the Top (RTTT) grant in 2010, while DEEC received \$50 M federal Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge (RTTT-ELC) funds in the first round (2013). Even more recently, DEEC has been engaged with the National Governors Association (NGA) and five other states as part of an Early Learning Policy Academy to create a Birth through Grade Three policy agenda. Our products to date include a report entitled *Building the Foundation for College and Career Success from Birth through Grade 3*. [Appendix A.1.1.] This core document identifies the knowledge, skills and essential qualities that characterize students who are truly college and career ready, beginning with early education.

Partnerships and Shared Responsibility. No agency in the Commonwealth, at the state or community level, could do this work effectively without the direct engagement and support of families and the community leaders and organizations in which they live. DEEC proudly continues to expand its robust investment in structures and processes that support communities to serve the state's vulnerable children and families across sectors. [F(1-2)] In addition, DEEC has developed a strong record of inter-agency partnerships across state government, including but not limited to the Departments of Public Health (DPH), Mental Health (DMH), Transitional Assistance (DTA), Children and Families (DCF) and Housing and Community Development (DHCD), and the Office of Refugees and Immigrants (ORI) [B(6)].

A Birth-3 grade Framework. In this context, we are especially focused on the years between birth and 3 grade with attention to birth outcomes, age-appropriate early growth benchmarks, readiness for preschool and for kindergarten, and what should be, for all children, a world-class elementary school experience and the essential accomplishment of reading proficiency as children exit the 3rd grade [C(3)].

(A)(2) Provide High-Quality Preschool Programs (HQPPs) in High-Need Communities

With this application, DEEC will engage further with the federal Department of Education to advance access to and improve the quality of state preschool programs, family engagement, comprehensive community services, and interagency collaborative service systems in five HN

Communities: Boston, Holyoke, Lawrence, Lowell and Springfield. Together, these communities are home to more than 15% of the Commonwealth's four-year olds.

Individually and jointly, these communities face considerable economic and educational challenges, as revealed in the DPH Maternal Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) needs assessment and grant application, Gateway Cities economic status data, and DESE public school district reform and performance data. [D(1)] They are also communities in which DEEC has made considerable financial and human capital investments and where the communities themselves have organizational, family and community assets to further build upon. These assets include two or more Early Learning Programs (ELPs) in each participating community who have agreed to participate in the work of this grant [E(1)].

(A)(3) Increasing Preschool Access for Eligible Children in Partner Communities

By statute, MA operates a "mixed service model" for the delivery of state-supported preschool programs. This model was established to support parental choice to the greatest extent possible and provide high quality programs to choose from, including family-based and center-based early education and care programs, Head Start, those supported through the state's Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK) program, and state-supported public school operated (LEA) preschool programs and classrooms. In Year I of this grant, the Commonwealth will increase the number of Eligible Children attending HQPPs in five communities by ~750 and will sustain this number annually over the four years of this grant, therefore serving at least ~3,000 Eligible Children.

(A)(4) Achieving High Quality Status based on the 12 Elements of a HQPP

The Commonwealth will continue to advance high quality, aligned with federal HQPP standards, by building on our strong foundation of licensing regulations, expanding provider enrollment and upward movement in the MA QRIS, with continued supports for workforce development. Our voluntary QRIS is a four-tiered model [*Appendix A.1.4.*], with all UPK programs achieving a Level 3 status aligned with the HQPP elements. This structure has been cross-walked with Head Start Performance Standards, UPK Grantee requirements, and with quality elements of programs offered by LEAs at the community level [B(4), *Appendix B.4.1.*, *Appendix B.4.2.*]. Because in

early education as in K-12 schooling the role and capabilities of the teacher/educator are pivotal to students' success, DEEC has a broad program of educator professional development and financial supports aimed at advancing the continued development of educator skills and credentials. We partner in this work with DHE as well as two- and four-year institutions of higher education in the state. At the present time, 75% of UPK programs funded by DEEC have at least one BA-level teacher in each classroom. All programs serving Preschool Expansion four-year olds will be in full compliance with this requirement by September 1, 2015. Further, we have constructed our Subgrantee arrangements and our cost model to enable LEAs to compensate individuals employed in this capacity with salaries comparable to their public school colleagues.

(A)(5) Setting Expectations for School Readiness

The Commonwealth's expectations for children's school readiness are set through its early learning guidelines and kindergarten guidelines [B(1)]. Because many children with special needs (or their parents) have grown up with Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES), we include substantial professional attention to the negative role of adversity in children's early development and school performance. (*The Science of Adversity and Resilience*, Harvard Center on the Developing Child, 2014) For children with special language needs, including emerging English language learners, DEEC has recently adopted national *Early English Language Learner (E-ELD) Development Standards* [B(1)].

Additionally, we are members of the national Strengthening Families (SF) Network, a learning community that supports family success through the promotion of "protective factors." This framework is pivotal for MA because it acknowledges the critical role of families in supporting children's early learning, and identifies a series of ways in which B-5 programs can support families to support their own child(ren)'s development. It would not be inaccurate to describe this work as "setting *family* expectations for school readiness. In the coming year, we will continue to embed the SF framework [*Appendix A.5.1.*] (a) in our work with publicly-supported agencies and services at the state and local level, (b) in our focus on comprehensive child and family screening and developmental assessment, and (c) in our expectations about the delivery of

comprehensive, multi-generational supports and services. Participation in content-specific co-training opportunities will be required of all LEAs participating in this grant award.

The translation from standards to practice is anchored in the MA Early Learning and Development Assessment System (MELD), created to measure child growth and development from birth to grade three. As part of this work, DEEC is collaborating with DESE to implement the MA Kindergarten Entry Assessment System (MKEA) [C(3)]. Participating school districts will employ Teaching Strategies-GOLD, an evidence-based formative assessment tool aligned with the Common Core. This tool measures a student's development across all developmental domains, and supports reflective professional development content and practice.

(A)(6) Support among a Broad Group of Stakeholders

A core value proposition in DEEC work is respect for, and support of, strong and enduring partnerships with a broad array of stakeholders. These partnerships have allowed Massachusetts to learn firsthand what makes a successful system for supporting early childhood initiatives in collaboration with multiple stakeholders.

At the statewide level, this work is supported across agencies [B(6)] as well as by the DEEC and its Advisory Council. Additionally, we enjoy the support and useful analyses of key advocacy organizations such as Strategies for Children and the MA Budget and Policy Center (the Annie E. Casey Kids Count organization in MA). We also have strong positive relationships with professional organizations, including the MA Association of Early Education and Care, MA Head Start Association, MA Alliance of YMCAs, MA Association for the Education of Young Children, the MA Association for Infant and Toddler Mental Health, Birth to Six, Boston Children's Museum and many others included among the letters of support for this application. (Please see attached) The Department continues to benefit from solid operational management and a positive policy and budgetary relationship with the Executive and Legislative branches of government. These statewide supportive relationships are essential as DEEC builds a sustainable expansion and results framework for our Preschool Expansion Program work.

(A)(7) Allocation of Funds

With this grant application, DEEC requests a four-year annual award of \$15M to be matched by other funds totaling nearly \$6M [Competitive Priority 1]. Five percent (5%) of these Preschool Expansion funds (\$750,000) will be used to enhance statewide quality and accountability structures and investment to support our five LEA partners and the rest of Commonwealth communities as well. The main categories of work to which these funds will be allocated [C(1)] are summarized below:

- Personnel, including hiring a Preschool Expansion Project Director, Fiscal Monitor, Data Analyst, and a 50% share of three Master Teachers \$300,000
- DEEC share of a longitudinal data study \$117,639
- IT Support \$75,000
- Technical Assistance Set-Aside \$25,000

The remainder of the funds largely will support fringe benefits, indirect costs, travel, equipment, and supplies.

As shown below, the balance of Preschool Expansion funds (\$14,250,000) will be provided, annually upon the demonstration of expected progress, to the five LEAs as Subgrantees on this grant:

- Boston: \$4,061,250
- Holyoke: \$1,425,000
- Lawrence: \$2,351,250
- Lowell: \$2,850,000
- Springfield: \$3,562,500

To allow LEAs the flexibility to customize the use of these funds to accomplish the goals of this initiative, DEEC will provide these resources in a block-grant format. The cost model, more fully described in [D(4)], is based on a per-student allocation anchored to the Commonwealth's K-12

Chapter 70 education foundation grant amount. We have enhanced this unit cost approach to account for expanded hours (eight vs. six hours per day) and weeks (full year vs. school year), set a floor level to assure a minimum investment for the smallest community, Holyoke, and a ceiling for the largest community, Boston, enhanced to account for the highest cost of living in that community. Within 90 days of receiving a Subgrantee contract, each LEA will provide to DEEC a satisfactory first-year plan aligned with its MOU, along with a more general projection for the four years of the award. As part of this plan, each LEA will be required to address their planned methodology for outreach to families that is linguistically and culturally appropriate for the communities that they serve, including those that may be isolated or otherwise hard to reach, in order to ensure that all families are informed of the opportunity to enroll their children in available programs.

While each LEA Subgrantee will individualize its plan for expanded access, improved quality project and effective comprehensive supports (for the child and family), 5% of its funds will be authorized to support local project administration. An additional 5% will be set aside by each LEA and combined to fund a common evaluation and knowledge development process [D(4)]. These set asides were taken into account when estimating the numbers of Eligible Children each district will be expected to serve in HQPPs.

SECTION B: COMMITMENT TO STATE PRESCHOOL PROGRAMS

(B)(1) Early Learning and Development Standards

Although this section refers only to Birth to age 5 standards, we include Kindergarten standards because we fully understand the need for transition management, a full developmental learning continuum, and aligned instructional guidance. The formal documents listed below comprise the MA Early Learning and Development Standards as defined in this grant application. Further information on each of these, including detail on its development, is in [*Appendix B.1.1.*].

- *MA Early Learning Guidelines for Infants and Toddlers (2010)*
- *Guidelines for Preschool Early Learning Experiences (2003)*

- *Kindergarten Learning Experiences (2008)*
- *WIDA Early English Language Development (E-ELD) Standards (2013)*
- *Preschool Science, Technology and Engineering (STE) Learning Standards for Preschool (2014)*

The infant/toddler, preschool and kindergarten guidelines are age/grade appropriate and cover all four required components of the Program Standards as described in this grant application. The standards have also been cross-aligned with each other over the course of their development and ongoing review. The *E-ELD* framework is aligned with the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework. *Preschool Science, Technology and Engineering Learning Standards*, created in partnership with World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA), are developmentally appropriate for children 2.9 to 5 years old and aligned with the existing DESE-approved *STE Standards* for preschool through grade 5.

In FY15, DEEC and WIDA will focus on: (a) educator, administrator and family training to better support Dual Language Learners (DLL) children through a blended learning model, (b) the application of content knowledge into everyday practice through training and coaching, and (c) the development and dissemination of practitioner resources to be used by practitioners to engage families in language development as it relates to school readiness. After completion of the training and coaching by WIDA, the MA *Early English Language Development Standards* will be presented to the DEEC Board in 2015 for adoption and implementation. These Standards will be available in five languages: Spanish, Haitian/Creole, Brazilian Portuguese, Simplified Chinese (Mandarin), and Arabic.

To ensure that all early childhood development standards are used widely, DEEC modified childcare licensing requirements to mandate that programs adhere to the *Early English Language Development Standards (E-ELD)*. In addition, our standards have been used as a foundation for the MA QRIS to guide curriculum and professional development. This important decision, representing our commitment not only to high quality early education, but also to aligning the

Pre-K and K-12 sectors, has been key to the state’s goal of creating a truly seamless birth to age 20 system through a continuum of standards-based learning.

(B)(2) State’s Financing Investment

In FY15, DEEC projects that over half a billion dollars (\$545M) in state and federal funding will be expended to improve young children’s development (birth to age 5) in the Commonwealth, exclusive of health care expenditures and nutritional supports such as SNAP and WIC. This funding level is also independent of DOE expenditures and government support of K or PreK education at the community level. Despite the State’s slow recovery from the recent recession, this represents an increase of 13% over FY 2011 funding (\$482M). Over just the past two fiscal years, this funding increased by 10%.

Generally, the funding outlined above allows the DEEC to serve about 57,000 infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and school-age children per month through our subsidy system. DEEC does not currently possess the ability to disaggregate the number of four year-olds served, but will have that capability starting in January 2015 with the launch of its new Child Care Financial Assistance IT application. Currently, DEEC supports approximately 18,000 preschoolers, defined as 33 months to four years and 11 months.

The chart below presents funding by program category over the period FY 2011-2015. Dollar amounts are presented in millions (M). Of note: State match to TANF funds exceeds the required amount in each year by \$31.2M to \$32M. Additional descriptions of programs can be found in the Master Listing of Programs [*Appendix B.1.2.*]. Additional detail on selected programs follows.

FY 2015	FY 2014	FY 2013	FY 2012	FY 2011	Funding Sources
9.1	8.1	8.0	7.5	7.5	Supplemental State Head Start (HS) & Early HS

8.5	7.3	7.3	7.4	7.4	State EEC Preschool (UPK & K1)
25.6	27.3	27.8	31.1	29.5	State IDEA Part C
9.0	8.3	8.9	9.0	9.0	State Special Ed & Related Services (PreK & K)
76.2	76.4	76.4	76.9	77.1	State CCDF (exceeds match required)
311.6	274.7	264.7	279.6	293.4	TANF Early Learning and Development
47.6	48.6	27.0	22.8	21.7	State DPH Part C MassHealth (Early Intervention)
40.2	35.1	34.5	35.1	36.8	DPH Part C Private Insurance
16.8	11.5	8.7	1.2	0.0	RTTT-ELC
544.6	497.3	463.3	470.6	482.4	Totals in millions

Head Start/Early Head Start State Supplemental Grant Program. This program provides state supplemental salary grants for 30 federally funded Head Start agencies. For FY15, this grant was funded at \$9.1 M, an increase of nearly 10% from FY 2014.

Universal Pre-Kindergarten Grants. These grants fund DEEC-licensed preschool programs to: (a) promote use of the Early Learning Standards for children participating in UPK classrooms and family child care homes, (b) support and enhance the quality of services for children, especially high needs children and/or children living in under-performing school districts, (c) maximize parent choice and (d) support the use of evidence-based assessment systems/tools. For FY14, two UPK grants were issued with total funding of \$6.3M: (a) A renewal grant (approximately \$5.6M) to fund the 208 existing UPK programs and (b) an open competitive grant (~\$692,000) to fund preschool programs not currently in the UPK program.

K1 Classroom Expansion Grants. New FY15 state funds were provided in the amount of \$1M for grants to various jurisdictions for additional PreK classroom slots for four-year old children, with a priority given to DESE Level 5 schools and school districts [D(1)]. Guidelines are in the process of development. These funds are included as part of our Competitive Priority 1.

Waitlist Initiative. DEEC maintains an online child care waitlist that stands at over 28 K children as of October 2014. From 2011 through 2013, no resources were available to address these needs. In FY14, DEEC received \$15M in new funding to reduce the waitlist for income-eligible early education and care programs, and 2,367 children received vouchers by the EEC-imposed deadline of December 20, 2013. In FY15, DEEC received an additional \$15M that will provide access to approximately 2,500 additional children.

Early Education and Care and Out-of-School Time Capital Fund. In November 2013, Governor Patrick signed the 2013 Housing Bond Bill, now Chapter 129 of the Acts of 2013, into law. This bill created a new Early Education and Out of School Time (EEOST) Capital Fund under DEEC with a \$45M initial capital expenditure authorization for grants for the purpose of funding the development or renovation of licensed early education and out of school programs. Approximately \$8M in funding will be released before the end of calendar 2014.

MA Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS). RTTT-ELC provides \$7.5M towards the operation of the MA QRIS. Just over \$538,000 is expended for operational support and \$6.9M is expended in quality improvement grants to providers.

(B)(3) Enacted and pending legislation, policies and/or practices

The table below provides examples of some of the more significant legislation, policies and practices representative of the Commonwealth's commitment to state early education and programs. A full listing of all DEEC laws, regulations and policies are online at the department's website.

Reference and Purpose	Reference	Legislation, Policy/Practice
Established UPK to assist in providing voluntary, universally accessible, high quality early education and care for preschoolers through a mixed delivery system to “serve and integrate diverse abilities and special needs, diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds and diverse economic circumstances.”	Statute M.G.L. c. 15D, §13 (a)(b)(c)(d)	Creation of the Universal PreK Program (UPK)
Regulations pertaining to state subsidy of early education and out of school time programming and the policies on how financial assistance is distributed including; how family eligibility is determined, how the centralized waiting list works, how parental contributions are determined, the reassessment and/or termination process of financial assistance.	606.CMR 10.00 Subsidized Child Care and 2013 Financial Assistance Policy Guide	Financial Assistance Regulations and Financial Assistance Policy Guide
Passed in 2012 to establish a statewide reading proficiency goal for all MA children to be achieved by the end of third grade.	Legislation Chapter 287 of the Acts of 2012	Third Grade Reading Proficiency
The Board of Early Education and Care (The Board) is required to submit to the legislature an annual report documenting its progress in achieving the goals and implementing programs authorized under Chapter 15D (DEEC’s enabling statute).	Statute M.G.L.c.15D §§ 3(g), 10 and 13(d)	DEEC Annual Report to the Legislature
The SAC may comment on any rules or regulation before promulgation by the DEEC Board of Early Education and Care and recommend changes and improvements in early	Statute M.G.L.c.15D, §3A	State Advisory Council (SAC)

<p>education and care services. The State Advisory Council (SAC) represents the balance and diversity of the Commonwealth in race, ethnicity, gender and sexual orientation.</p>		
<p>Created a new Early Education and Out of School Time Capital Fund within DEEC to issue grants from a \$45M fund for the development or renovation of licensed early education and out of school program facilities.</p>	<p>Legislation Chapter 129 of the Acts of 2013</p>	<p>Housing Bond Bill</p>
<p>The Board must develop and annually update a plan for a workforce development system, including all center, family child care, infant, toddler, preschool and school-age providers, designed to support the education, training and compensation of the early education and care workforce.</p>	<p>Statute M.G.L.c. 15D§</p>	<p>Early Education and Care Workforce Development Plan and Report</p>
<p>The study is designed to identify ways to improve regional and statewide efficiency in the distribution of state-supported childcare, analyze the child care needs of eligible families relative to availability, evaluate the balance of providing quality early childhood education with providing workforce support guardians.</p>	<p>Legislation Chapter 38 of the Acts of 2013</p>	<p>Study of Child Care Supports</p>
<p>The Strengthening Families approach/Protective Factors Framework is a research-based, strategy employed in 30 states to increase family strengths, enhance child development and reduce child abuse and neglect. It is embedded in the MA QRIS.</p>	<p>National Best Practice: Center for the Study of Social Policy</p>	<p>Strengthening Families/ Protective Factors Framework</p>
<p>(a) Whenever children are preparing to transition to a new classroom or program, the educator must:</p>	<p>DEEC Licensing Regulations 606</p>	<p>Transition policy</p>

<p>1. Collaborate and share information between each classroom or program, with parental permission; and</p> <p>2. Assist the child with the transition in a manner consistent with the child’s ability to understand.</p> <p>(b) If a program chooses to suspend or terminate a child for any reason the program must provide written documentation to the parents of the specific reasons for the proposed suspension or termination of the child, and the circumstances under which the child may return, if any.</p>	<p>CMR 7.04 (18) (b) Transitions</p>	
<p>Established the Child and Youth Readiness Cabinet to provide for “the consistent, efficient and effective coordination of effort between and among the government agencies whose services, programs and delivery systems to collectively address the needs of the whole child and his or her family.”</p>	<p>Governor’s Executive Order #505</p>	<p>Child and Youth Readiness Cabinet</p>
<p>QRIS standards were adopted by the Board in December 2010, incorporating learning standards, curriculum, assessment, educator preparation, and family and community engagement.</p>	<p>DEEC Policy</p>	<p>QRIS Standards</p>
<p>Policy issued in 2010 presenting early education and care policies and guidelines for children whose home languages are other than or in addition to English.</p>	<p>DEEC Policy</p>	<p>Non-English Home Languages of Children</p>

(B)(4) Quality of Existing State Preschool Programs

Among low-income three- and four-year old children attending publicly-supported preschool, 36% attend Head Start, 36% attend state-subsidized family or center-based child care settings or the UPK program, and 29% attend preschool in LEA-funded classrooms (MA Budget and Policy

Center, 2014). Quality program standards covering all of these settings have been adopted by the Commonwealth. These include DEEC licensing of preschool programs, the MA QRIS, Federal Head Start Performance Standards, and NAEYC accreditation standards.

The foundation upon which DEEC's quality program is built is a set of licensing regulations recognized as some of the most ambitious in the country. DEEC's licensing regulations were most recently revised in 2010 to include language related to curriculum, interaction, transition and assessment of children. DEEC employs approximately 80 staff members across the state who license and monitor over 10,000 programs. These programs (family child care, large group and school-age, and residential and placement settings) are responsible for the health and safety and early education of 250,000 children on a daily basis. Ensuring all programs are frequently monitored and well-supported is crucial to the health and safety of children, but provides challenges for agency staff.

Massachusetts has been recognized as the state with the strongest, most comprehensive child care program requirements in the country. Child Care Aware's *We Can Do Better: 2013 Update* ranked Massachusetts as 2nd best (2nd only to the Department of Defense) in the country on child care program standards. To align the state's monitoring performance with its robust regulations, DEEC is in the process of developing new differential monitoring processes that will maximize the utilization of agency staff, enable more frequent interaction between EEC staff and programs, and acquire additional licensing staff to improve caseload ratios.

At the present time, 10 of the 12 structural elements of a High Quality Preschool Program as defined in this federal application package are included across these MA quality standards. The two standards on which progress must still be made are: (a) the requirement for a BA educators in each classroom and (b) salary comparability with similar LEA positions. MA will be in compliance with these two remaining standards for programs funded through this grant. [Appendix B.4.1.] MA completed a crosswalk of the MA Licensing, QRIS, and UPK requirements and standards with the 12 structural elements of High Quality Preschool Programming. [Appendix B.4.2.]

The MA comprehensive QRIS is built upon the Commonwealth's child care and placement licensing framework, evaluated recently as among the best in the nation. The chart below summarizes the MA QRIS five standards.

1. Curriculum and Learning: (a). Curriculum, Assessment and Diversity and (b) Teacher/Child Relationships and Interactions
2. Safe, Healthy Indoor and Outdoor Environments
3. Workforce Qualifications and Professional Development: (a) Designated Program Administrator Qualifications and Professional Development and (b) Program Staff Qualifications and Professional Development
4. Family and Community Engagement
5. Leadership, Management, Administration and Supervision

The five standards apply across three different program types: Center-based and School-based child care, Family Child Care and After School and Out of School Time Programs. In June 2014, the MA QRIS Working Groups began work on a fourth program type, Public School-based programs. It is the goal of the Commonwealth that, over time, the MA QRIS will evolve into a single, common tiered-rating system for all DEEC-licensed programs [*Appendix A.1.4.*].

The following current DEEC investment support early education and care programs as they work to advance through the four-tiers of our MA QRIS:

QRIS Improvement Grants. A RTTT-ELC funded project, DEEC contracts with the United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Merrimack Valley to manage the FY13 - FY16 QRIS Program Quality Improvement Grants. The United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Merrimack Valley is responsible for: (a) Managing the grant application process for programs, coordination and technical assistance to programs receiving grant funding, (b) Providing professional development

that supports QRIS, and (c) Managing all aspects of the fiscal process for grants. QRIS Program Quality Improvement Grants support eligible programs/educators to plan for and implement direct program improvements, in pursuit of upward progress on the levels defined in the QRIS system [*Appendix A.1.4.*].

Project Peer Assistance and Coaching. Also a RTTT-ELC funded project, this effort is focused on designing a model for peer assistance and coaching to help programs improve quality as evidenced by their ability to meet criteria on the QRIS. Colleague coaches define and enhance the colleague-to-colleague relationship to support individual educator growth and change. This model of peer coaching combines the promise of coaching as an effective quality improvement strategy and the reality that the existing early childhood teachers and directors may be well-equipped to support each others' practices. This model takes elements from Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) coaching model currently used in many K-12 school districts.

QRIS Measurement Tools Grant. Utilizing state funding, DEEC contracted with Child Development and Education (CDE) to perform several key functions in support of the MA QRIS, through online and face-to-face instruction, followed by on-site work, available at introductory, intermediate and advanced levels:

- Design and coordinate training on the QRIS measurement tools;
- Provide access to those tools to support program improvement;
- Coordinate with Educator and Provider Support (EPS) Grantees [B(5)] to ensure that local programs engaged in QRIS have access to and are being trained to use measurement tools in their programs;
- Develop and deliver modules for the Environment Rating Scales and other tools used in the MA QRIS [*Appendix B.4.3.*]; and
- Support Grantees in developing the ability to deliver similar training using a training of trainers model.

This training is adapted to address the needs of English Language Learners, as well as children with special education needs.

Training in Business Planning. With RTTT-ELC funds, DEEC contracted with Inspirational Ones in 2013 to develop an easily accessible business improvement resource. Its purpose is to assist both home-based and center-based educators to implement sound business practices. These improvements result in higher scores on the Program Administration Scale and the Business Administration Scale and support programs in advancing to a higher level on the QRIS. A related contract with Little Sprouts, an identified ELP for this proposal's work in Lowell, will implement a training of trainers statewide.

(B)(5) Coordination of preschool programs and activities

The Commonwealth operates from a comprehensive services framework for young children and their families that includes direct services, resources, and technical assistance needed by and provided to consumers, and has the operational infrastructure necessary to support a high quality comprehensive system, including coordination across service sectors. Central to this infrastructure is the Board of Early Education and Care. The DEEC Board reviews EEC budget related activities that are brought to the full Board for discussion and decision making, and supports EEC's efforts to implement a system to improve and support quality statewide and to offer an array of high quality, comprehensive, and affordable programs designed to meet the diverse, individual needs of children and families. The Board also functions as the State Advisory Council for purposes of aligning state and federally funded initiatives. In its oversight capacity, the Board, with the DEEC Commissioner serving as its Secretary, meets monthly and ensures that DEEC funds a variety of programs through grant programs that build upon program quality and support coordination of efforts across quality domains. These include:

The Massachusetts Head Start (HS) and Early Head Start (EHS) Programs. DEEC is deeply involved with Head Start where 30 local HS Grantees and 18 EHS Grantees serve over 14,000 young children and their families with comprehensive access to needed services. The MA

Preschool Expansion Grant ELPs include programs with Head Start in all five communities (Boston, Holyoke, Lawrence, Lowell, and Springfield).

The Educator and Provider Support (EPS) grant funds a network of five regional Grantees for professional development opportunities. These Grantees are the state's primary vehicle through which early educators gain access to effective professional development opportunities, including providing credit-bearing coursework, and support services including technical assistance, coaching and mentoring. DEEC also utilizes the state's six *Readiness Centers* to further support professional development and improve alignment across Massachusetts' education entities birth - 20 years old. These Centers are operated by regional consortia of partners, including higher education, school districts, early education and out-of-school-time providers, educational collaboratives, non-profit organizations, and business and community members.

The Coordinated Family and Community Engagement (CFCE) grant program supports 89 Grantees to provide all families with access to locally available comprehensive services and supports that strengthen families and promote optimal child development. Key work includes: (a) universal and targeted outreach, especially to children with multiple risk factors and/or hard-to-reach families and children; (b) linkages to comprehensive services; (c) family education through evidence-based early literacy and family literacy opportunities and (d) transition supports to promote successful birth to age eight transitions, with a specific focus on Kindergarten transitions.

The Inclusive Preschool Learning Environments (IPLE) grant is designed to (a) support local program capacity to offer inclusive preschool learning environments in center-based programs and public school preschool programs and (b) enhance program quality by continuing to require IPLE funded programs to participate in QRIS.

Early Childhood Resource Centers (ECRCs), a collaborative venture with five public libraries that began in 1991, has created broader access for parents, public schools, and others to

materials, resources and referrals available to the early childhood community across the state. These Early Childhood Resource Centers provide evidence-based activities, and resources to strengthen the capacity of families to support their children's literacy development and referrals to families and early education and care programs to community-based adult literacy programs and local CFCE Grantees for access to comprehensive services.

As a comprehensive early education and care agency, DEEC resources are directed towards promoting coordination of early education and care (including preschool) within DEEC, as well as with other state agencies serving vulnerable children as described in detail in [B(6)] below.

As the DEEC plans for its State FY16 budget recommendation and undertakes its grant activities during the fiscal years that would be applicable to the Preschool Expansion Grant, it will seek to engage its resources, largely described in this section and [B(2)], to support Preschool Expansion Grant activities without diminishing other services or increasing costs to families for related programming.

(B)(6) Promoting Coordination of Preschool Programs with Other Sectors

DEEC is actively engaged with partner state agencies to coordinate preschool and early childhood efforts with the Commonwealth's health and human services sector.

Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. DEEC and DESE partner to promote the alignment, coordination and quality of preschool and early elementary school settings. Recent examples include: (a) joint development of guidelines and applications for the K1 Classroom Expansion project, including quality standards that ensure school readiness and 3rd grade reading proficiency for students in pre-k classrooms; (b) alignment of the E-ELD standards for both DEEC and DESE; and (c) ongoing joint implementation of the MA Kindergarten Entry Assessment (MKEA) initiative.

Department of Children and Families (DCF). DEEC and DCF regularly partner in the referral and provision of early education services to over 7,000 children involved with DCF. Care is

provided to children through a closed referral process where children are placed with contracted providers. These educators receive a supplemental rate to address the needs of this population. To promote attention to early childhood and child development within the child welfare system, DEEC also supported DCF to establish a new mandatory full-day in-service training for new DCF social workers on early childhood education, brain development, school readiness, and trauma-informed care. DEEC also created a new Early Childhood Mental Health Certificate Program for DCF social workers to increase expertise in the social and emotional needs of young children and their families. DEEC works with DCF on an ongoing basis to embed early childhood development in DCF policies, professional development, and technical assistance to the field. In partnership with the Children's Trust and DCF, employ the SF Protective Factors as a best practice for working with families [B(3) *Appendix A.5.1.*].

Department of Housing and Community Development. DEEC and DHCD jointly administer a subsidy program that enrolls over 690 homeless children in child care programs statewide through contracts with licensed early education programs. Programs receive a supplement to this supportive contract to address the needs specific to homeless children and families. DEEC has also worked with DHCD to assure quality support to vulnerable young children and their families experiencing unstable or transient housing through (a) the distribution of bilingual information on local early education resources and (b) training on the Ages & Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) for staff of homelessness agencies. In addition, DEEC has distributed over 2,000 books for children living in hotels, motels and shelters.

Department of Mental Health. To strengthen the comprehensive statewide system of mental health supports for children and families, DEEC worked with DMH to: implement (a) collaborative joint professional development opportunities that address prevention and intervention for children with emotional or behavioral challenges; (b) promote and model desired cross agency teamwork for mental health agencies and early childhood educators providing early childhood educational mental health consultation; and (c) developed an Interagency Service Agreement with EOHHS and its Medicaid Office to expand the capacity of a major mental health state system to address young children's unique needs.

Office of Refugees and Immigrants. To support early learning and school readiness for immigrant and refugee children and their families, ORI and DEEC sponsored a series of “New Start: Supporting Multilingual Young Children and Immigrant and Refugee Families” trainings for over 300 individuals from CFCE Grantees, Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (CCRRA), MASS 2-1-1, Family Child Care providers, Head Start, and ORI service agencies.

Department of Public Health. DPH is the lead agency for the federal MIECHV grant, and has received between \$9.05M and \$10.66M each year over a five year period. DEEC acts as one of the collaborating agencies, and its Commissioner is one of the co-chairs for the program. Additionally, the Massachusetts Children’s Trust, DCF, and the Head Start State Collaboration Office are also collaborating agencies for this project. In addition, QRIS Nurse Health Advisors conducted 196 trainings on medication administration to 99 early child care programs, reaching 1,300 educators statewide.

SECTION C: ENSURING QUALITY IN PRESCHOOL PROGRAMS

(C)(1) Use no more than 5% of funds for infrastructure and quality improvements

As outlined in Section A above as well as in the budget detail sections of this application, DEEC will utilize no more than 5% of total requested funding (\$750,000) to support the work proposed in this grant application. This is possible because Subgrantees, the five LEAs, along with the 12 Early Learning Providers (ELPs) and their other local partners will share responsibility for implementing oversight requirements, improving program quality, and delivering child outcomes.

The five percent (5%) retained by DEEC will be used to enhance statewide quality and accountability structures and investment to support our five LEA partners and the rest of Commonwealth communities as well. The main categories of work to which these funds will be allocated are:

- Personnel, including hiring a Preschool Expansion Project Director, Fiscal Monitor, Data Analyst, and a 50% share of three Master Teachers \$300,000
- DEEC share of a longitudinal data study \$117,639
- IT Support \$75,000
- Technical Assistance Set-Aside \$25,000

These investments will enable DEEC to implement and monitor grant activities. DEEC has allocated funding to ensure that lessons will be learned for future development of a statewide system of high quality preschool programming through the funding of a longitudinal study, explained in greater detail in [E(3)]. Additionally, commitment to ongoing partnerships with our Grantees is inherent in this cost-sharing model where DEEC will support portions of the longitudinal study and the cost for Master Teachers.

(C)(2) Implement a system for monitoring and support continuous quality improvement

DEEC will support LEA Implementation Plans [*Appendix C.2.1.*], in part, through its system to monitor preschool program quality. This system will be anchored in a solid quality infrastructure (as described below), existing monitoring processes to avoid duplication (such as regular licensing visits) to assure continued compliance with health, safety and educational standards foundational to program quality and enhancements to ensure Continuous Quality Improvement. This system will also enable DEEC, the LEAs, and ELPs to work at quality improvement in four contexts: the community, its HQPPs and classrooms, and children's development individually and in the aggregate. The elements of our Monitoring System will enable MA to achieve its ambitious goals and create a structure well suited for eventual statewide implementation. See [*Appendix E.4.1.*] for a description of all monitoring activities for this grant.

Project Director. DEEC will hire a full-time Preschool Expansion Project (PEP) Director tasked with overseeing and guiding implementation in each of the five communities. A job description of this position is provided. [*Appendix C.2.4.*]

Fiscal Monitor. This individual will monitor LEAs to ensure that the financial management systems of each of the LEAs meet standards related to financial reporting, accounting records, internal controls, budget controls, allowable costs, source documentation, cash management, non federal audits, and other grant related requirements. It will also conduct on-site fiscal monitoring of subgrantees.

Data Analyst. As data is key to DEEC's ability to monitor, assess, and improve preschool program quality. This individual will coordinate all collection, analysis and dissemination of data collected related to this project. This individual will act as a bridge between DEEC and our subgrantees and their partners and help in sharing data with our Federal partners and other states. This individual will also help facilitate the delivery of the longitudinal study detailed in our application narrative.

Interagency Advisory Group. Monitoring will include a Preschool Expansion Program interagency team comprised of representatives of DEEC, DESE, and DHE. This team will act in an advisory function and will oversee the development of policy and working procedures related to (a) the delivery of high quality preschool programming, (b) evaluation, (c) local monitoring and (d) lines of responsibility of LEAs and community partners. Described more fully in [E(4)], the Advisory will model the inter-agency collaboration expected at the local level; ensure alignment across current efforts; promote coordination of current DEEC, DHE, and EOHHS resources in the five communities.

Regional Monitoring Teams. As described in more detail in [E(4)], five Regional Monitoring Teams (RMTs), one in each participating community, will consist of a DEEC Regional Director or designee, the District Superintendent's designee, regional staff currently responsible for oversight of related state funded grant activities, and current Grantees of services. The teams will report to the Project Director and have direct oversight of the LEAs and their DEEC-licensed ELPs through a DEEC-approved MOU. [E(4), *Appendices C.2.1. & C.2.2.*] The RMTs will assess progress on grant milestones in each community and develop specific Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) plans as needed, to include progress towards securing comprehensive

services, family and community engagement, and creating a comprehensive public-private early childhood system as part of the local preschool to Grade 3 continuum.

The Monitoring Protocol. Grantees and their local partners will begin with the self-assessment employing *A Framework for Planning, Implementing and Evaluating PreK to 3rd Grade Approaches* described in [E(2), **Appendix E.2.1.**] to reflect on systemic changes that can be made to better support program quality. This comprehensive framework includes needs assessments relative to comprehensive services, family and community engagement, and professional development. The monitoring protocol described above is informed by and consistent with that used by the state of New Jersey and by the Boston Public Schools in their K1 preschool program. These protocols were selected for their relevance to Massachusetts and, most importantly, their proven ability to produce positive child outcomes. Moreover, this protocol uses the state's program quality support infrastructure including its QRIS, EPS professional development network, CFCE infrastructure dedicated to connecting children, families, and programs to comprehensive services and community resources, and uses the formative assessment tools undergoing the MKEA. These building blocks, combined with staffing models that allow for coordination, information sharing, feedback, and accountability, will drive continuous program improvements for preschool children in Massachusetts.

Learning Communities. Professional Learning Communities are an integral element in Implementation Science. The PEP Director will convene Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) that provide the five LEAs with the opportunity to come together to identify challenges, problem-solve, share their CQI efforts, glean best practices, discover creative or innovative means for meeting community needs, and share lessons learned. [E(5)] delineates more specifics about the timing and substance of these meetings. These communities will also benefit the state's effort as a whole to advance HQPPs and expand access.

Public School Preschool Coordinators. In order to support effective coordination at the local level, each LEA will be required identify a Preschool Coordinator responsible for coordinating

state and local resources needed to ensure assessment and delivery of high-quality preschool learning experiences.

Fiscal Monitoring. As described in [E(4)], DEEC will monitor LEAs to ensure that the financial management systems of each of the LEAs meet standards related to financial reporting, accounting records, internal controls, budget controls, allowable costs, source documentation, cash management, non federal audits, and other grant related requirements. DEEC will also conduct on-site fiscal monitoring of Subgrantees.

Research. As detailed in [C(3)], DEEC's research plan has four parts:

1. Formative assessments of each individual child generated at the classroom level that look at all domains of child development [C(3)].
2. Direct pre- and post-assessments of children's mathematic, language, literacy, and social emotional development from a sample of participating preschoolers in each of the five LEAs during Year 2. This will provide for verification of reported results based on the formative assessments and to allow for course correction;
3. Pre- and post-assessments to measure the emotional, organizational, and instructional supports provided by classroom teachers using an evidence based assessment tool such as the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS); and
4. The longitudinal study of child, family, and program outcomes funded jointly by LEAs and DEEC and designed by DEEC with guidance from the Interagency Advisory Team.

Data and IT Support. IT staff will work with each Grantee and each Subgrantee, as needed, to ensure that every child enrolled in preschool under this grant is assigned a state Student Identification number (SASID), has a comprehensive child- and family-profile, and that the profile is modified as needed to accommodate inclusion of child-assessment data and provider information.

Strategic Communications. DEEC will support local outreach and enrollment efforts by: (1) continuing its Brain Building in Progress campaign [*Appendix B.1.2.*] designed to explain the

importance of early learning to families and the general public, (2) create culturally and linguistically appropriate materials for use across Massachusetts' diverse communities, and (3) maintain effective communications with policymakers, stakeholders, and local partners to ensure coordination of preschool services and continue to build support for preschool expansion.

Continuous Quality Improvement Plans. Existing MA Program Quality Specialists (PQS) support early education and care programs to achieve and maintain high quality by providing individualized technical assistance, annual site visits and ongoing support. PQS will collaborate with the PEP Director and LEA leadership to develop a CQI plan [***Appendix C.2.3.***] for each of the 12 ELPs based on assessments including ECERS and CLASS, and that is consistent with MA QRIS. Using both the program's self-assessment and the PQS observations, the CQI plan will identify the program's strengths and opportunities for improvement, as well as develop concrete action steps to help the program improve quality and advance in the tiered QRIS system. A second annual visit by a reliable rater will focus on measuring the emotional, organizational, and instructional supports provided by classroom teachers using an evidence based assessment tool (such as the CLASS). Strengths and challenges identified through these assessments, as well as steps for improvement, will be included in the CQI plan and monitored for implementation and progress.

Coaching and Mentoring by Master Teachers. DEEC and the LEA's will jointly hire, and Grantees will approve, Master Teachers to provide preschool teachers with coaching, mentoring, curriculum guidance and support. One Master Teacher will serve no more than 20 preschool classrooms. A job description with qualifications is provided in [***Appendix C.2.4.***]. Master Teachers will work closely with the LEAs and ELPs to implement CQI plans and help teachers to meet the needs of individual participating children.

Individualized and Joint Workforce Support. DEEC will utilize its existing regional system of EPS Grantees, in partnership with LEA and ELP leadership, to review the CQI plan, Individualized Educator Professional Development Plans, classroom and program assessment results, and to obtain input from classroom teachers and Master Teachers to identify professional

development supports needed to advance educator and program quality. LEAs and their local partners will ensure access to the professional development resources that advance program quality for each of the 12 ELPs, with support from the EPS Grantees as needed. Wherever possible, Joint Professional Development (JPD) will be encouraged to strengthen collaboration and coordination between LEAs and their local partners, including educators, administrations and policy staff.

Key Community, Program, Classroom and Child Activities

Community Level: Grantees and their local partners will begin with the self-assessment tool, *A Framework for Planning, Implementing and Evaluating PreK to 3rd Grade Approaches* [E(2), *Appendix A.1.1.*] to reflect on systemic changes that can be made to better support program quality. This comprehensive framework includes needs assessments relative to comprehensive services, family and community engagement, and professional development.

Program Level: DEEC will continue to assess and support program quality through QRIS PQSs to ensure high program quality through verification of program policies and completion of formal professional development, classroom observations, and assessment using several evidenced based measurement tools, including ECERS. PQS will work with ELPs to develop a CQI plan, as referenced above, and to advance within the tiered QRIS system.

Classroom Level: Building on the classroom level observations conducted under QRIS, the quality of early learning experiences will be assessed via an ERS Reliable Rater observation and a Certified CLASS Observer in Year 1. The PQS and Mentor Teacher will work with the classroom teacher in Years 1 and 2, using the data from the observations as a base. In Year Three, the ERS Reliable Rater and CLASS Observer will return, and the PQS and Mentor Teacher can continue to work with classroom teachers. At the end of the grant, there will be a final ERS Reliable Rater observation and CLASS Observation, which will provide information to compare the classrooms before and after the preschool expansion grant program.

(C)(3) Measure the outcomes of participating children

DEEC will employ three strategies to measure child outcomes:

1. Use of TS-GOLD [*Appendix C.3.1.*], or similar formative Assessment System;
2. Direct assessments of children's mathematic, language, literacy, and self-regulation skills by a reliable rater; and
3. A longitudinal study to assess the impact of this grant on outcomes of participating children as they move through the educational continuum.

Comprehensive Formative Assessment. Comprehensive formative assessment systems are widely used in preschool settings across Massachusetts. Presently, TS-GOLD is used by four of the five partner LEAs and this tool allows for alignment with the MA Kindergarten Entry Assessment (MKEA) and analysis of participating children's readiness for school as assessed by their kindergarten teachers [*Appendix C.3.1.*]. TS-GOLD is designed to help teachers to: (a) observe and document children's development and learning over time; (b) support, guide, and inform planning and instruction; (c) identify children who might benefit from special help, screening, or further evaluation; and (d) report and communicate with family members and others. TS-GOLD is aligned with Common Core and the *Guidelines for Preschool Learning Experiences*. Moreover, because over 55% of Massachusetts' public school districts are using TS-GOLD and participating in MKEA, reliance on this or a similar tool to assess child outcomes facilitates future preschool expansion.

The MKEA is aligned with and reflective of the state's broader Birth to Grade 3 vision as defined in *Building the Foundation for College and Career Success for Children from Birth Through Third Grade* [*Appendix A.1.3.*] and the state's early learning standards. It provides a developmentally-appropriate approach to measurement that is supportive of diverse learners by allowing children to demonstrate their knowledge in an authentic manner. Aligned with assessments used in early learning environments across age cohorts, the MKEA informs instructional practice, encouraging the integration of key experiences children need as they build skills in areas of essential competencies.

Direct Assessment. Comprehensive formative assessment by a child’s teacher is not, however, sufficient by itself to assess program efficacy in achieving positive child outcomes. Therefore, DEEC will employ a direct form of assessment in order to review child progress across many developmental domains and balance the information generated through quantitative and qualitative data collection. A random sample of participating children in each of the five districts will also receive third-party administered assessments of children’s mathematic, language, literacy, and self-regulation skills in the Fall and Spring beginning in September 2016. These assessments will be nationally normed and could include: the *Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test* (4th Ed.), *Woodcock Johnson Letter Word Identification and Problem Solving Subscales*, the *DIBELS First Sound Fluency and Letter Naming Fluency*, and/or the *Devereux Early Childhood Assessment & Preschool Learning Behaviors Scale*.

Longitudinal Study. Additionally, DEEC will conduct a longitudinal study that assesses the impact of this grant on participating children. In consultation with the interagency advisory group, the RMTs, and a team of external researchers, DEEC will design a study to assess, in part, growth in child outcomes across developmental domains. The study will include assessment of child outcomes during the preschool year, at kindergarten entry, and during elementary school. It will also look holistically at program quality, family factors, and a wide range of outcomes in order to inform broader expansion of preschool access across Massachusetts.

SECTION D: EXPANDING HIGH QUALITY PRESCHOOL PROGRAMS IN EACH HIGH NEED COMMUNITY

(D)(1) Selection of Communities and Subgrantees

To assist in the selection of HN Communities and Subgrantees, DEEC reviewed information from five data sources: (1) the Federal Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) Program; (2) the Commonwealth’s “Gateway Cities”; (3) the DEEC RTTT-ELC funded B-3 Alignment Grantee Communities; the (4) Level 4 “most struggling” schools and (5) Level 5 “most serious” underperforming school districts as designated by the DESE. These five data sources are charted below:

Districts with Level 5 Schools, DESE	Districts with Level 4 Schools, DESE	B-33 Grade Alignment, RTTT-ELC	Gateway Cities, M.G.L. c 23A § 3A	Federal MIECHV
<p>4 districts Based on data from Level 4 data analyses, these schools are now in state receivership</p>	<p>6 districts Four-year data: (a) absolute achievement, (b) student growth/improvement as measured by the MCAS</p>	<p>9 towns Each received RTTT-ELC funding in 2014 to enhance its integrated B-3 grade infrastructure and alignment.</p>	<p>26 towns Indicators: Population of 35,000 to 250,000 Median household income below state average BA attainment below MA state average</p>	<p>15 towns Indicators: Poor perinatal, young child developmental and health outcomes Poverty Unemployment Crime Dom. Violence Abuse/Neglect Subst. Abuse Educational outcomes</p>

All five communities were ranked in the top MIECHV risk indicators [D(2), *Appendix D.1.1.*]. None of these five communities is in a federal Promise Zone.

Additionally, the DEEC Commissioner convened an advisory group twice during the development of this application to provide input on the results of data gathering and the selection of communities. The following organizations participated: MA Association of Early Education and Care Agencies (MADCA), MA Head Start Association, DHE, DESE, Strategies for Children, Thrive in Five, Bessie Tart Wilson Initiatives for Children, SEIU 509 (union for Massachusetts family child care providers), several local child care agencies, YMCAs of Massachusetts, Massachusetts State Legislative Representatives, and representation from the

City of Boston. Based on DEEC’s data analysis and the valued input of the advisory group, DEEC identified five communities: Boston, Holyoke, Lawrence, Lowell, and Springfield.

Demographic Detail:

Pop: 617,594; White 54%; Black 24%; Asian 9%; Hispanic 17%	Boston
Pop: 39,880; White 66%; Black 5%; Asian 1%; Hispanic 48%	Holyoke
Pop: 76,377; White 41%; Black 8%; Asian 2.5%; Hispanic 74%	Lawrence
Pop: 106,519; White 60%; Black 7%; Asian 20%; Hispanic 17%	Lowell
Pop: 153,060; White 52%; Black 22%; Asian 2%; Hispanic 38%	Springfield

These data are significant for community outreach, family engagement, and service delivery (including education and comprehensive services) as they reveal dramatic differences across these five High Need municipalities based on race and ethnicity. The data are also particularly relevant to economic development planning and investment. Of particular note is the very high proportion of Hispanic families in Lawrence, followed by Holyoke and then Springfield. In fact, across MA, the growth of “New Americans” is of particular significance: in 2011, nearly one million MA residents were immigrants. (New Americans in MA: The Political and Economic Power of Immigrants, Latinos, and Asians in the Bay State, Immigrant Policy Center, 2014). Presently 1 in 7 MA residents are Latino or Asian. Though often described in terms of income challenges facing these individuals and families, it is important to note their economic capacity as well. The 2012 purchasing power of Latinos and Asians in Massachusetts, respectively, totaled \$15.3 and \$17.8 billion. For Latinos, this presents an increase of 505% since 1990; for Asians, this represents an increase 744% since 1990. We share these data to illustrate our view that the growth of an increasingly multicultural, multi-ethnic and multilingual population in the Commonwealth affords us all great opportunities for learning and growth, civic participation and respectful engagement across people and cultures.

(D)(2) How each High Need Community is currently under-served

Many families and children in each of these five High Need Communities experience significant needs, as evidenced by needs assessments and data studies conducted by DEEC and our inter-agency partners in state government as noted in [D(1)].

Birth Conditions and Child Maltreatment. These particular data are important because they speak to the challenges of risk and vulnerability for young children and thus the learning and development progress they bring to their first engagements with early care and education in these MA communities. High risk pregnancies and births have been found to correlate with learning challenges in the early years, and living in families where children's needs are not met (i.e., substantiated "neglect" in a child welfare context) creates conditions of "toxic stress" that negatively impact early brain development. (*The Science of Neglect*, Harvard Center on the Developing Child, 2012) The recent re-emergence of "two generation" approaches to comprehensive services for children and parents *together* will be of particular importance to our cross-sector, comprehensive and well-aligned Birth-grade three efforts. (*Two, or More, Generation Frameworks: A Look Across and Within*, Center for the Study of Social Policy, April 2014; *Helping Parents, Helping Children: Two-Generation Mechanisms*, The Future of Children, Spring 2014; *State Policies through a Two-Generation Lens*, National Center for Children in Poverty, September 2014). Data from a state-conducted needs assessment in 2010 for the MIECHV federal grant relevant for each of the identified communities can be found in [*Appendix D.1.1.*].

Poverty and Crime. There is no disagreement among scientists, policy makers or families that living with poverty-level income creates great stressors for families, is correlated with higher levels of domestic violence and community crime, and impacts on school readiness. A recent report, *Profile of Hunger, Poverty, and Federal Nutrition Programs*, reveals important increases in unmet needs related to the ability of a family to even feed its children. For the Commonwealth

as a whole, student enrollment in the federal Free and Reduced Price Meals (FRPM) program increased by 41% over the past decade. SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, formerly food stamps) has increased by 70% in the past five years. The WIC (Women, Infants and Children) program served 28,000 infants and 66,600 children on an average monthly basis in 2012. The Child and Adult Care Food Program for family child care centers increased enrollment by 20% over the past 10 years; for child care centers, enrollment increased by 8% (Food Research and Action Center).

Taken together, the income and crime data below confirms high levels of unmet needs in participating communities. In 2014, the FPL for a family of three was \$19,900; 200% of the FPL for a family of three was \$39,588, with a significant concentration of female headed households (FHH) with very young children.

State	Springfield	Lowell	Lawrence	Holyoke	Boston	Unmet Need Indicator
16	51	18	40	46	24	Poverty FPL % children 0-4 years
40	60	35	48	58	43	% FHH w/ children 0-4
449	1255	1059	653	1135	1104	Crime Violent crimes per 100,000 residents
	2.8	2.4	1.5	2.5	2.5	Odds ratio: city greater than state

School Indicators. There are significant numbers (and percentages) of MA children that enter kindergarten having had no preschool experience. These data coupled with the 3rd grade reading scores illustrate continued need to interrupt this trajectory. Data on high school dropouts further confirms the urgency here.

State	Springfield	Lowell	Lawrence	Holyoke	Boston	Unmet Need Indicator
3	9	4	12	10	8	Drop Outs % students

Estimates of unmet need for eligible four-year olds must be calculated across funding sources. As noted in [A], the MA Budget and Policy Center recently estimated that 19,000 income-eligible three- and four-year old children in the Commonwealth are not participating in publicly-supported preschool programs. DEEC estimates, therefore, that about 9,500 of these children are age four and are underserved across the Commonwealth. Aggregating waitlist data across DEEC funded programs, we do know that no fewer than 784 income-eligible four year olds are already the DEEC income-eligible waiting list for HQPPs in our five partner communities. Our plan calls for serving ~750 across all five communities in each year of the grant.

Total	Springfield	Lowell	Lawrence	Holyoke	Boston	Unmet Need Indicator
784	143	127	138	41	335	DEEC Waiting List # of 4-year olds

(D)(3) Outreach to and Selection of Subgrantees. Data from the 2014 MCAS was analyzed and a high proportion of students in these five communities’ scored well below the statewide average 3rd grade reading proficiency score (57%) in both 2013 and 2014. Following review of this data and taking into account the strong working partnerships between DESE, DEEC and the LEAs, it was determined (and agreed to by the advisory group) to invite each identified LEA to become one of the five Subgrantees for the Preschool Expansion proposal.

32% proficient or higher in 2013; 36% in 2014	Boston
13% proficient or higher in 2013; 15% in 2014	Holyoke
29% proficient or higher in 2013; No change in 2014	Lawrence

37% proficient or higher in 2013; 42% in 2014	Lowell
35% proficient or higher in 2013; 37% in 2014	Springfield

The DEEC Commissioner then spoke with the Superintendent of Schools in the five High Need Communities to explain the opportunities, challenges and terms of engagement should the School District agree to serve as Subgrantee. All accepted the invitation and agreed to the following terms and expectations:

- Serve as the lead agent for the local grant;
- Work collaboratively with the selected DEEC-licensed ELPs around the expansion of preschool services for four-year olds;
- Participate in local governance structures as it relates to the grant activities;
- Partner with community-based preschool programs and state-funded professional development Grantees to offer joint professional development on topics including, but not limited to, developmentally appropriate curriculum, instruction and assessment practices, leadership development, and family engagement;
- Support outreach and transition activities for children entering preschool and kindergarten and their families;
- Work with community-based Subgrantees to develop data systems that inform the schools as children enter kindergarten regarding their current skills and competencies as they relate to our state's early learning standards and that reciprocates by providing aggregate information back to programs as to children's progress in kindergarten;
- Participate in a longitudinal study through the life of the grant designed to evaluate child outcomes related to participation in grant funded classrooms and services; and
- Develop plans with community-based partners around the evaluation of local efforts and sustainability of current efforts and expansion should future funding become available.

(D)(4) How the State will subgrant the award of at least 95% of its Federal grant award to its Subgrantees for HQPPs, and sustain this funding

In developing a budget model to ensure that each community, no matter their own individual characteristics, would be able to implement HQPP, DEEC focused on giving LEAs flexibility to adjust for their different circumstances. The steps involved in this process are presented in some detail below.

Step 1: Calculate the 95% Of the \$15M, DEEC held back 5%, including \$25,000 for the required TA set aside. This results in a \$14.25M allocation to the LEAs.

Step 2: Determine the allocation methodology across LEAs

(2a) To avoid using outdated Census data to project the population of four-year olds in each community, DEEC worked from current public school kindergarten enrollment data. These data were then checked against current birth data for each community, as well as LEA data on the proportion of entering kindergartners who had no preschool experience.

(2b). To take into account community size and prevent wide disparities due to population, the first cut fiscal projections were adjusted by a \$4M ceiling on Boston and a \$1.5M floor for Holyoke.

Step 3. Confirm allocation. The follow table presents the actual allocations, along with the estimated number of four-year olds in each LEA (not limited by income status), the amount allocated and the proportion of the total accounted for by each LEAs award.

Proportion of Total	Year I Fiscal Allocation	Total population of 4-year olds	LEA
29%	\$4,061,250	4,379	Boston
10%	\$1,425,000	481	Holyoke

16%	\$2,351,250	1,075	Lawrence
20%	\$2,850,000	1,301	Lowell
25%	\$3,562,500	2,173	Springfield

Step 4: Establish parameters for use of these funds. DEEC will require that 5% be held by each LEA to cover administrative costs associated with core elements of this proposal. An additional 5% will be allocated from the LEA award for evaluation and research functions. Unlike the administrative 5% which will be held and managed by each Subgrantee, the additional 5% will be contributed by the Subgrantee to a common pool of funds that will be matched with \$117k of the State’s portion of the grant and used to fund a common contract for independent evaluation and research across the five partner communities. The Evaluation funding will fund a longitudinal study to examine the delivery of high quality preschool programs and their impact on child outcomes [C(3)]. This study will also inform systemic changes for the statewide early childhood system over time. Combined, these carve-outs account for approximately 10% of the community’s allocated amount.

Direct Services	5% Evaluation	5% Admin	LEA
\$3,665,278	\$192,909	\$203,062	Boston
\$1,286,062	\$67,688	\$71,250	Holyoke
\$2,122,003	\$111,684	\$117,562	Lawrence
\$2,572,125	\$135,375	\$142,500	Lowell
\$3,215,156	\$169,219	\$178,125	Springfield

Step 5. Clarify uses for Direct Service funds. The balance of funds are available to the LEA for “Direct Services.” Direct Services funds will be transmitted to the LEA as a block amount to

cover all costs and expenditures related to the operation of high quality preschool classrooms including, but not limited to: teacher salaries, comprehensive services as outlined in this application, outreach efforts to families and students in each district, inclusion activities, family engagement and professional development. A specific annual plan will be required of each district before these funds may be expended in any grant year.

Step 6. Set minimum preschool expansion parameters. To determine the number of students to be served in each community, DEEC used the MA Foundation Budget Rates per Pupil from Chapter 70, the state's elementary and secondary school funding formula. Since the DEEC program design is for an eight-hour day, full-year program, we prorated the state foundation grant amount to account for the additional time. This annual amount per student is \$13,811.

We then increased this amount to account for the needs the targeted population will require including low-income student support, supplemental special education services, supports for English language learners, etc. The annual Boston's per student cost was then further increased by \$2,000 to capture the wage factor adjustments related to the city's cost of living compared to the other participants of this grant. Based on the assumptions above, the estimated number of children served in our proposal is as follows:

Total	Springfield	Lowell	Lawrence	Holyoke	Boston	
754	195	156	128	78	198	# 4-yr olds to be served
784	143	127	138	41	335	# of 4-year olds on DEEC waitlist

As required by the terms of the grant, LEAs and their contractual partners will have the opportunity to determine the most cost efficient manner to deliver these direct services through the negotiation and establishment of an MOU with DEEC and between each other when funds are awarded [*Appendix C.1.1.*].

(D)(5) How the State, in coordination with the LEAs, plans to sustain HQPPs after the grant period

The Commonwealth will develop a series of strategies, collaboratively with our community and LEA partners, to assure multi-level fiscal resources to sustain (and further advance) the progress we will have made under this grant. Funding *opportunities*, an application for Social Innovation Financing, will have to be created at both the community and state level. Each of the strategies is introduced here, but will require substantial work to advance. In at least one of these strategies, work will need to begin before the Commonwealth is actually awarded the \$15M from this grant opportunity.

Social Innovation Financing (SIF). Pay for Success (PFS) is emerging nationally as a means of bringing unlikely partners together to finance effective programs and interventions (usually evidence-based models) that have the potential to: (a) solve specific social problems, (b) provide social value and some degree of cash-able savings for government, (c) move government funding from paying for performance to paying for outcomes, and (d) prevent later, more expensive government fiscal outlays (*Pay for Success: Child Care Financing Challenges and Opportunities*, Institute for Child Success, September 2014).

Three PFS early childhood financing deals have already been announced. Utah will expand access to high quality preschool for 600 children this year to promote school readiness, improve 3rd grade outcomes, and avert later special education costs and other elementary school remediation costs. South Carolina will expand the Nurse Family Partnership to 2,700 low income families to reduce a series of well-documented predictable risks to young children's development and reduce costs in programs such as Medicaid, TANF and child welfare. Chicago recently announced that they will increase services including high quality preschool programs to 2,600 young children in high need communities to improve school readiness, assure 3rd grade reading proficiency and reduce special education costs.

The federal government has just awarded \$12M funding through the White House Office of Social Innovation and the Corporation for National and Community Services to eight organizations (including Third Sector Capital Partners, the Nonprofit Finance Fund, and the Institute for Child Success) to increase organizations' capacity to apply for and successfully complete Pay for Success private financing deals over the coming three years. At least one of the organizations, the Institute for Child Success (ICS), will issue an RFP within the next 60 days to select a first set of organizations partners (i.e., states, cities and organizations) and begin to establish TA and SIB (Social Impact Bond) development in the early childhood arena. Because these deals can take up to two-years to consummate, DEEC will immediately examine its readiness to reply to the expected RFP related to preschool access and quality for ICS TA and support. RFP opportunities are expected from the other SIF funded entities over the coming months as well.

The Commonwealth has established a leadership position in the PFS arena already. In January, the Patrick administration announced the launch of the nation's largest financial investment in a PFS initiative, designed to improve outcomes for almost one thousand of at-risk young men in the probation system or leaving the juvenile justice system. This initiative will allow a local non-profit provider service provider to serve these young men in 15 communities providing intensive outreach, life skills and employment training that will reduce recidivism and help these young men become assets and resources in their community. This Social Innovation model will include success payments from the Commonwealth, and from the U.S. Department of Labor, which awarded the Commonwealth a first-of-its-kind PFS grant of \$11.7M in September 2013. A second project to be funded in this manner is designed to make an impact on the state's 16,000 person waitlist for adult basic education programs and English-language classes. Three Massachusetts nonprofits contracted to rapidly expand access to those programs, as part of a \$15M initiative fueled initially by outside investments to form a public-private partnership to address this need.

SECTION E: COLLABORATING WITH EACH SUBGRANTEE AND ENSURING STRONG PARTNERSHIPS

(E)(1) state and LEA roles and responsibilities in project plan implementation

[*Appendix E.1.1.*] provides a detailed chart of DEEC and LEA Grantee responsibilities. Categories covered in the chart include: (a) Policy and program quality improvement; (b) Service delivery; (c) Research and evaluation; (d) Operational supports; and (e) Public engagement to support sustainability. Specific roles and responsibilities identified in the chart will be used as source materials when the formal MOUs are created with each grantee and their local community partners (Subgrantees). This will be completed within 90 days from receipt of grant funds, once funding has been awarded. During that process, the work items assigned to both DEEC and the LEAs may be modified for clarity and improvement.

(E)(2) How HQPPs will be Implemented

High quality preschool programming will be implemented via contracts with LEAs in the five identified communities. Each LEA will work in partnership with the identified ELPs in each community to develop and submit a plan in the form of an MOU to DEEC as the formal conveyance of the specific expectations of the grant-funded preschool program. The MOU will include the following requirements:

Self-Assessment. LEAs and their SubGrantees will jointly complete *A Framework for Planning, Implementing and Evaluating PreK-3rd Grade Approaches* [*Appendix E.2.1.*] and revisit this tool in Years 1-4.

Improved Collaboration. LEAs and DEEC-licensed ELPs will strengthen communication and collaboration between the public schools, community-based preschools, Head Start and family child care programs, and other community providers of comprehensive family services *through Individualized and Joint Professional Development (JPD)*. Individualized and joint professional development will be a core strategy and will include educators, administrators and policy staff on

such topics as: (a) new scientific knowledge about child and family development; (b) developmentally appropriate curriculum, instruction, assessment aligned with Massachusetts' early learning standards; (c) transitions into preschool and kindergarten; (d) family engagement; (e) program monitoring, evaluation and research in support of Continuous Quality Improvement; and (f) sustainability and the future expansion of full-day/full-year preschool opportunities for young children supported by blended funding streams. Methodology for the provision of professional development will include coaching and mentoring by a Master Teacher, credited courses, and establishment of PLCs among Grantees.

Staff Qualifications. Through subcontracts with identified DEEC-licensed ELPs, LEAs will deliver services in compliance with HQPP Standards, including: (a) at least one BA-level DEEC-certified lead teacher (with credentials and requisite knowledge of content and pedagogy as defined in this grant) in each classroom serving Eligible Children; (b) teaching assistants with appropriate credentials; (c) high quality professional development opportunities for all staff that includes evidence-based in-practice supports such as coaching and mentoring by a Master Teacher; and (d) compensate Preschool Expansion instructional staff at levels commensurate with local K-12 instructional staff.

Classroom Learning Environment. Providers of HQPPs will offer full-day (minimum of 8 hours per day) and full-year programming; reduce class size to no more than 20 with at least one teacher with high staff qualifications; assure teacher;child ratios of no greater than 1:10. In addition, providers will assure the availability of high quality culturally- and linguistically-appropriate supplies and materials for children. The nature, context and content of interactions between the educators and children will be of high quality, as measured in the evaluation/longitudinal study by tools such as the CLASS and ECERs. Providers will meet all DEEC licensing requirements for health and safety standards and will demonstrate alignment of their curricula with State Learning and Development Standards. Additionally, each of the selected Subgrantees will seek and maintain NAEYC accreditation, maintaining the highest quality across all 10 accreditation program standards.

Developmentally appropriate culturally and linguistically responsive curriculum and instruction. HQPPs programs will align the preschool curricula with the MA Curriculum Frameworks' preschool standards, provide individualized and joint professional development for public and community-based early education and care administrators and educators on implementation of the preschool curricula; and plan professional development on instructional approaches that are developmentally appropriate for preschool children.

Comprehensive assessment systems. The LEA and the local DEEC-licensed ELPs will: (a) obtain an approved formative assessment tool for use in participating public and private sector preschool classrooms; alignment of formative assessment tools with MKEA will be addressed (b) provide JPD on the use of the tool and formative assessment data (including observational data) to inform curriculum, individualization of instruction for children and future professional development needs of staff; (c) plan time for administrators and educators to review data and plan for instruction; and (d) enroll in the MA QRIS, seek and maintain accreditation through NAEYC, participate in the use of CLASS, ECERS and/or other program quality tool as part of the evaluation/longitudinal study.

Comprehensive Services. LEAs and the local DEEC-licensed ELPs will specify a plan to provide or refer to (for children enrolled and their families as needed) behavioral health consultation and evidence-based interventions, health, nutrition, vision, hearing and dental services. Programs will, whenever possible, offer comprehensive services on site (e.g., vision, hearing screenings) and will refer families to other comprehensive services when on-site provision is not possible. Programs will offer JPD on issues of case practice in the delivery of comprehensive services, and collaborate with community-based organizations to assure effective referral and follow-up with individual children and families. LEAs and ELPs also will work with the local CFCEs to assess each participating child's specific needs, identify available resources, and then facilitate connection between those services and the child and his or her family.

Inclusion. LEAs and their contractual partners will: (a) provide JPD on the inclusion of *all* children, including children with disabilities, children who are English language learners,

children who are experiencing homelessness; children from refugee and immigrant families, children from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds and children from military families; (b) provide JPD on the E-ELD standards; (c) plan for curriculum, instruction and assessment practices that are designed that include appropriate accommodations, modifications and individualized supports so the needs of all children, including children with disabilities, children of diverse socioeconomic backgrounds and English language learners are met; (d) provide opportunities for administrators and educators to meet to discuss progress and plan instructional support for children meeting the criteria listed above; and (e) provide effective, family-responsive outreach to families, inviting and supporting their engagement in classroom and extended activities throughout the program year.

Linkages with 0-3 and K-3rd grade. As described in [F(1-2)], LEAs will continue to align HQPPS with supports and services (i.e., curriculum, instruction, assessment, inclusion, professional development, family engagement) for infants and toddlers, as well as for children, families, and teachers in K-3. In collaboration with infant/toddler programs and K-3 educators, LEAs will develop guidance and training on transition strategies for children and families entering preschool and /or into kindergarten, as well as professional development for preschool teachers on infant-toddler standards and K-3 standards. Additionally, LEAs will collaborate with community-based partners to develop data systems that address reciprocity of data sharing between sending and receiving programs to inform instructional practices and on-going professional development.

Family and Community Engagement. Applicants must describe plans to collaborate with the local CFCE specialist to: engage families and the community in the importance of early learning and development and support them in providing their children with developmentally appropriate learning opportunities at home and in the community; conduct outreach and provide support to educators working with families enrolled in the community partner programs; and focus on outreach strategies for hard-to-reach children and families, including those not currently served by early education and care programs with the local CFCE specialist.

In the first year of the grant LEAs and Subgrantees will be required to: plan all grant activities via the development of the grant MOU, perform outreach to families, identify specific locations of preschool services, increase licensed capacity (if necessary) at each site, hire staff and comprehensive service providers, select assessment systems and implement family engagement strategies. Upon the completion of these activities, children will be enrolled. It is anticipated that children will begin enrollment, in some programs, as early as September 2015 and no later than December 2015; however, the expectation is that all enrollment will be complete by July 2016.

(E)(3) How the Subgrantee (LEA) will minimize local administrative costs

The design of the program supports minimal administrative costs at the local level by requiring joint planning and program development by the LEA and its contracted partners in each of the 5 selected communities. Administrative costs for the LEA and Subgrantees will be capped at 5%. Each LEA will also be required to set aside an additional 5% of the total allocation per community for participation in a evaluation/longitudinal study designed to evaluate the overall effectiveness of the Federal Expansion Grant in terms of the effectiveness of quality enhancements in the improvement of program quality and child outcomes. To ensure efficiency and a consistent approach, each Grantee will be required to participate in the single Longitudinal Study conducted by a research firm identified by DEEC. By requiring each LEA and its Subgrantees to develop just one MOU per community, DEEC will ensure that all partners align efforts from the planning through implementation and evaluation/longitudinal study of the grant funded activities. DEEC will have the opportunity to review all MOUs for efficiency and can ask for amendments to any plans that do not meet expectations prior to the awarding of contracts for services.

Finally, DEEC will minimize administrative costs through the amendment of existing state-funded grant programs to support Federal Preschool Expansion Grant communities. State-funded professional development, mental health consultation, CCR&R, and Head Start grants, described in [B(5)], will include language in 2015 and beyond that will require support and enhancement for Expansion Grant funded activities. Evaluation of the need for said supports and services will be gathered as part of the MOU negotiation, as well as monitoring of the five local communities

[E(4)]. For example, the professional development activities offered by EPS Grantees will be required to meet at least some of the professional development needs of the LEAs and their contract partners in the Federal Preschool Expansion grant.

(E)(4) How the State and Subgrantee will monitor Early Learning Providers

Monitoring of all grant activities and fund use will take place via two tiers of oversight as well as through DEEC's standard fiscal contract compliance testing. Additional information on the proposed Monitoring System was outlined in [C(2)] and is contained in [*Appendix E.4.1.*]

Tier One Monitoring. Tier One monitoring will consist of a high level Preschool Expansion Program inter-agency team comprised of representatives of DEEC, DESE, and DHE. This team will act in an advisory function and will oversee the development of policy and working procedures related to (a) the delivery of high quality preschool programming, (b) evaluation, (c) local monitoring and (d) lines of responsibility of LEAs and community partners. Tier One monitoring will model the inter-agency collaboration expected at the local level; ensure alignment across current efforts; promote coordination of current DEEC, DESE, DHE, and EOHHS resources in the five communities; and inform a framework, policies, funding and guidance for the sustainable design of future birth to grade three models of early learning that can be replicated statewide in years to come. Tier One monitoring will also guide the mandatory Longitudinal Study conducted by an approved research/evaluation partner. This research team will be charged with the design and implementation of an evaluation/longitudinal study that takes place over the life of the federal expansion grant that describes the work of the LEAs and Subgrantees and the resultant impact on child outcomes over time.

Tier Two Monitoring. Tier Two monitoring will consist of the direct oversight of the LEAs and their contract partners in the delivery of grant-funded services. The foundation for this oversight will be the development, in the first weeks of grant allocation, of a MOU between DEEC and each LEA. Each LEA will be required to use this MOU as the foundation for specific service delivery plans with each Subgrantee [*Appendices C.2.1. & C.2.2.*]. DEEC will review and

approve each MOU prior to the grant allocation. Once approved, these targets will serve as a mechanism for a regional monitoring team to measure progress, identify gaps and inform activities and adapt expectations of future grant years.

DEEC will require quarterly progress reports from each Grantee using the specific and measurable outcomes outlined in each MOU. DEEC will aggregate this information across Grantees as a means of regular and consistent reporting on federally funded grant activities. While DEEC will be the lead in Tier Two monitoring activities, again, partners from within the education secretariat and across partner human service agencies will be called upon to model collaboration, align initiatives and support these monitoring efforts. Tier Two monitoring will take place via regional teams consisting of a Regional Director, the District Superintendent or his/her designee, regional staff currently responsible for oversight of related state funded grant activities and current Grantees of services, including RTTT-ELC projects, to assess progress on the grant milestones in each community and to assist in the development of improvement plans. Specifically, the selected LEAs and preschool programs will receive the following support and oversight via tier two monitoring activities, many of which will be incorporated into the work of existing EEC staff and Grantees:

Licensing. All preschool programming will take place in DEEC-licensed facilities. Therefore, all standard monitoring through the licensing unit will be implemented at each site. Activities will include:

- Monitoring visits by DEEC licensors as required and additionally, as necessary, to each Subgrantee to ensure compliance with licensing regulations. Any findings of noncompliance will be noted and the program will be required to submit a written plan for remediation to the program's licensor;
- License renewal visits according to each program's renewal cycle;
- Investigation of any complaints filed against a Subgrantee. Depending on the outcome of an investigation and the severity of any licensing non-compliances identified, DEEC may elect to implement any or all of the following: requiring a written plan for compliance,

holding an enforcement meeting with program leadership, enter into a legal agreement or impose sanctions on the program as a means of identifying methods to achieve compliance, take action to freeze or reduce the program's capacity, suspend or revoke a license; and

- Upgrades in the licensed capacity. Upgrades in licensed capacity will require a visit from the program's DEEC licensor to ensure that all licensing standards for the proposed capacity are met prior to implementation of program expansion.

QRIS. All Subgrantees will be required to participate in DEEC's QRIS and achieve Level 3, at a minimum, by the end of the four year grant cycle. As a result, programs will have access to DEEC resources designed to support the participation and advancement in the QRIS system. QRIS review process will include DEEC's PQSs working at the local level with programs to ensure high program quality through an accountability and monitoring process that involves verification of program policies and completion of formal professional development, classroom observations, and assessment using several evidenced based measurement tools.

Outreach and Family Engagement. DEEC's regional Family and Community Specialist will monitor the alignment of preschool curricula with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks preschool standards as they do in the monitoring of inclusive public preschool programs. The Family/Community specialist will also communicate with the CFCE Grantees to engage families in further compliance with objectives outlined in [C].

Professional Development. The EPS Grantee specialist will work with programs to comply with Individualized and Joint Professional Development (JPD), on how high quality programs will be implemented, and [F(1-2)] on creating and supporting a strong B-3 continuum.

Fiscal Oversight. DEEC's existing contract management team will provide grant oversight and ensure appropriate use of all grant funds. Activities will include two forms of monitoring; that of the LEA in terms of their contract with DEEC and that of the Subgrantee in the provision of care to eligible children.

LEA Contract Monitoring:

Objective: Monitor the activities of the LEAs to ensure that federal and state awards are used for the authorized purpose in compliance with federal and state laws, regulations, and the provisions of contracts or grant agreements and those performance goals are achieved. The on-site and desk monitoring reviews will allow an in depth review of the sub-recipients expenditure of grant funds and fiscal controls.

Methodology: DEEC will ensure that the financial management systems of each of the LEAs meet standards related to financial reporting, accounting records, internal controls, budget controls, allowable costs, source documentation, cash management, non federal audits, and other grant related requirements.

Subgrantee (ELP) Contract Monitoring:

Objective: The On Site Monitoring Review (OSMR) allows the Fiscal Monitoring Staff (FMS) to (1) perform an in depth review of the Subcontracted Provider's fiscal controls, (2) perform an eligibility records review of a preselected number of provider files to determine whether or not a provider is in compliance with the terms and conditions of their contract and grant requirements, and (3) ensure all Corrective Action Plans, when required, have been submitted.

Methodology: The FMS assigned to the OSMR will review the Contract Providers/Grantees existing fiscal and internal control systems to determine if the systems are effective in operating and managing the preschool programs funded through this grant. The FMS will also examine a preselected number of provider files using a random sampling methodology in order to ensure that: (1) all forms are properly completed, signed, and dated; (2) the required eligibility documentation has been received to support a family's income, residence, and relationship to child(ren) in childcare; (3) attendance records consisting of the sign in/sign out sheets and daily attendance log mirror the contractor's Service Delivery Report to ensure enrollment goals are

met and that services are provided for all eligible days; and (4) all fiscal documentation is available.

The FMS will provide the results of the review during the exit conference to the Contract Provider/Grantee. A formal report will be issued by the FMS after a review of the monitoring results has been conducted and approved by the Director of Audit Resolution.

(E)(5) How the State and the Subgrantee will coordinate plans

During the initial six months of the grant period, DEEC and the Grantees and Subgrantees will engage in a planning process to prepare for enrollment of children as early as September 2015. During that time, Grantees will work with DEEC and local SubGrantee partners to develop a MOU and Implementation Plan outlining all grant funded activities and expected measurable outcomes [*Appendix C.2.1.* and *Appendix C.2.2.*]. During this period, DEEC and Grantees will engage in negotiations regarding specific details of each community plan and their proposed involvement in monitoring activities. Once the MOUs with each LEA are complete, monitoring of activities will take place to ensure ongoing communication, coordination and sharing of best practice.

In Year One, DEEC will meet quarterly with all of the five LEAs and their Subgrantees as one group to establish PLCs. As mentioned before, the purpose of these PLCs meetings will be to discuss expectations, progress on the development of MOUs, sharing among Grantees information on methodology that represents best practice, innovation or creative means for meeting community needs and provide an opportunity for DEEC and other state partners to learn from the communities and the community-based partners. As described above, responsibility for quarterly meetings with LEAs and Subgrantees at the local level will shift to the DEEC regional offices. These will commence in year two of the grant, once programming is fully established and operational.

In subsequent years of the grant, the state-wide meetings between DEEC, LEAs, Subgrantees and relevant partner agencies will be held twice per year for the purposes of on-going shared learning, adaptive development of programs, clarification of expectations of the grant and sharing of innovative and successful practice.

In each year of the grant, the meetings will inform Tier 1 and Tier 2 monitoring activities. In addition to meeting regularly with DEEC, Grantees will be required to revisit and resubmit their planning document and MOU annually in partnership with their local community partners. Suggested changes will be reviewed by DEEC prior to implementation and the cause for proposed changes will be discussed with individual Grantees and the community partners. Using data gathered from the comprehensive assessment system as outlined in [E(2)] will inform ongoing monitoring of the initiatives at the state and local level.

Results of annual grant reporting from LEAs will be shared across Grantees as will evaluation/longitudinal study results of program quality and child outcomes data. These data will be used in coordination with the five communities to monitor plans and inform next steps as it relates to the grant requirements and objectives. For the purposes of Tier 1 monitoring activities and coordination of policies, programs and funding at the state level, progress on the grant funded activities will be reported monthly to the field via Commissioner updates and reports to the DEEC Board and related committees, including the agency's Advisory Board and Tier 1 monitoring committee.

(E)(6) How the State and the SubGrantee will coordinate, but not supplant, the delivery of HQPPs funded under this grant with existing services for preschool-aged children

Grants will fund the enrollment of a specified number of four-year old children that currently do not have access to a preschool experience. All quality enhancements will be delivered to these newly enrolled children. While many of the quality enhancements will benefit children currently enrolled in early education programs, Grantees will be required to specify in their Implementation Plan Template the number of those receiving direct services, as well as the

larger number of children benefitting from the quality enhancements. If a Grantee falls short on the delivery of services, monitoring activities and supports as outlined in [E(4)] will be implemented. Similarly, the MOU requirements specify that all grant funded activities must not supplant service delivery and may not serve as a method for funding services required for children with disabilities through the public school district.

Coordination of services has been built in to all levels of the planned implementation of this grant. This is exemplified in the manner in which each LEA and their local early education partners will design their service delivery plan, Tier Two monitoring teams ensure coordination at the regional level and tier one oversight demonstrates that at the highest level, coordination of efforts is prioritized.

(E)(7) How the SubGrantees will integrate High-Quality Preschool Programs for Eligible Children within economically diverse, inclusive settings.

To maximize the diversity of children to be enrolled in high quality preschool programming through this grant opportunity, DEEC has elected to use a model of block grant funding to local LEAs over a model based on state subsidized child care eligibility. In this way, low income children will be enrolled in high quality programs based solely on their need for an early education experience and not on the work or training needs of their parents. In Massachusetts, children at 200% of federal poverty level would not have access to preschool based on state subsidy eligibility requirements. Therefore, this model expands the eligibility levels for low income families while also allowing for blending of funding within programs. The blending of funding streams will result in the diversification of the socioeconomic makeup of the preschool classrooms. That is, children enrolled via funds from this federal grant would have access to learning environments with other children funded by Head Start and state-subsidy dollars, as well as those paid for privately by parents. This flexibility will allow for a greater diversity of children of varied socioeconomic backgrounds, bound only by the demographic realities of the communities in which they live.

In order to ensure that the supports are available to serve the diversity of populations represented by these communities, DEEC is requiring that Grantees address the following:

- ***Outreach methods:*** Translate materials; use community based groups like CFCEs and CCR&Rs to connect with communities;
- ***Staffing:*** Encourage programs to hire any new positions funded by this grant in a manner that reflects the racial, ethnic, cultural and language diversity of the communities being served.
- ***Inclusion:*** Require Grantees to provide support services to ensure that children with disabilities, English language learners and children from low-income backgrounds are served. Expansion of DEEC's current Flex Pool model of supports for inclusion of children with special needs will be encouraged. This model allows for 1:1 aids and adaptive materials and equipment for children in a manner that enhances inclusion without supplanting the services and materials required of the public school via an Individualized Education Program (IEP).
- ***Professional development:*** Include training on inclusion as well as cultural competency for participating staff.

(E)(8) How the Subgrantees will deliver High-Quality Preschool Programs to Eligible Children who may be in need of additional supports.

The design of this preschool program builds in a variety of supports for children with varying needs. Specifically, in addition to a high quality classroom experience with highly qualified staff, this program requires that Grantees offer a vast array of comprehensive services and supports including the delivery of, or referral to, the following comprehensive services: mental health, medical, dental, vision, hearing, nutrition and specialty therapies (e.g., speech and language; occupational therapy; physical therapy). These services are required as an acknowledgement that children's overall health and well-being, including social-emotional development and physical development, is necessary for children to be available and engaged in learning. As part of the Implementation Plan template, programs will be asked to address other barriers to participation, including transportation, and how the community will use local funds to address the barriers.

To ensure that the needs for these services are identified and addressed by those at the local level, Grantees are required to ensure that strong systems of communication and collaboration are in place between the public and community-based early education and care programs. These structures are inclusive of administrators, teachers and families and represent the diverse facets of early childhood education, including special education and support for English language learners/DLLs. Individualized and joint professional development among early childhood leaders and educators is required as part of a strong system of collaboration and an important opportunity for ensuring that all children in the community have access to high quality preschool opportunities. Strong structures for collaboration and communication between public and community-based early education and care providers provide the opportunity to coordinate access to full-day, full-year preschool services, including comprehensive services for four year old children in the community.

(E)(9) How the State will ensure outreach to enroll isolated or hard-to-reach families; help families build protective factors; and engage parents and families

As outlined in [E(2)], LEAs and community partners will collaborate with the CFCE Specialist and other local partners to identify outreach strategies that will be utilized to connect with isolated or hard-to-reach families. In addition, local CFCE coordinators will work with educators on how to meaningfully engage families of the children enrolled in the preschool classrooms. Family and community engagement strongly impacts the progress children make developmentally and in their learning. Engagement of families and the community in the importance of early learning and development and support in providing their children with developmentally appropriate learning opportunities at home and in the community is an important part of grant-funded local early childhood system-building efforts.

DEEC, in partnership with the Children's Trust and DCF, utilizes the Strengthening Families (SF) Protective Factors framework and approach in our work with families. This framework has widespread support from social science researchers, early childhood practitioners and policy experts in terms of its ability to mitigate risk factors and poor outcomes for children while

promoting optimal child development. SF is embedded in all relevant state funded programs in Massachusetts and is integrated into the MA QRIS. Required tools, such as the SF Self-Assessment, the SF Family Survey, and the SF Staff Survey, provide programs with an opportunity to reflect on their family engagement practices. Supporting educators in the SF framework will promote more meaningful and intentional engagement of families and ultimately, promote better outcomes for participating preschool children.

LEAs and their local partners funded through this grant will be required to offer family and community engagement strategies that include:

(a) Collaboration with the local CFCE Grantee and other community partners to conduct outreach and provide support to educators working with families enrolled in the community partner programs. CFCE Grantees act as a community based, information and resource hub for all families in order to increase knowledge of and accessibility to high-quality early education and care programs and services for families with children birth through age eight. CFCE Grantees maintain up-to-date community resource information, inclusive of resources, such as, mental health consultation, supports for families in crisis, resources for child medical screenings and assessments, supports for basic needs, and children's activities at libraries and museums. Additionally, CFCE Grantees actively implement universal and targeted outreach strategies, in order to reach and meet the needs of children, especially those with multiple risk factors and/or are hard to reach.

(b) A focus on outreach strategies for hard-to-reach children and families, including those not currently served by early education and care programs with the local CFCE specialist and other community partners:

- professional development for administrators and educators on SF and the importance of protective factors in a child's and family's health and well-being; and
- intentional engagement of community-based organizations, such as business, philanthropy, museums, libraries, cultural and faith-based organizations, in supporting

the development of the local early childhood system and the health and well-being of children and families in the community.

Services provided for four year old children must also be reflective of services and supports that include all children, including children with disabilities, children who are English language learners, children who are experiencing homelessness, children from refugee and immigrant families, children from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds and children from military families. Programs funded through this grant must have a plan for curriculum, instruction and assessment practices that are designed to include appropriate accommodations, modifications and individualized supports so the needs of all children are met. Individualized and joint professional development on the topic of inclusion, providing opportunities for administrators and educators to meet to discuss progress and plan instructional support for children meeting the criteria listed above and providing effective, family-responsive outreach to and engagement of families must be incorporated in local plans that supports and promotes inclusion.

(E)(10) How the State will ensure strong partnerships between each Subgrantee and LEAs or other Early Learning Providers

The effectiveness of services delivered for preschool children depend on the alignment of supports and services (i.e., curriculum, instruction, assessment, inclusion, professional development and family engagement) for infants and toddlers as well as those for children, families and teachers in K-3. Linkages include, but are not limited to: transition activities/supports for children and families into preschool and into kindergarten; professional development for preschool teachers on infant-toddler standards and K-3 standards; and reciprocity of data sharing between sending and receiving programs to inform instructional practices and on-going professional development. In [E(2)] above, the required elements to the design and provision of high quality preschool programming are outlined in detail.

This menu of support services was specifically designed as the foundation for this federally funded preschool program to ensure that the diverse body of children targeted for involvement will have the highest likelihood of success over time. Additionally, the interagency structure of

the oversight and monitoring teams was designed not only to ensure efficiency and alignment of services but also to bring together partners concerned with children in need of an array of supports. At the local level, LEAs and their partnering preschool programs were also selected due to their experience and expertise working together to meet the many needs and to avert the risk factors of children in some of the lowest income communities in the Commonwealth.

The design for local implementation, led by LEAs in partnership with community partners that are poised to lead the way in the provision of high quality integrated preschool, was developed as a replicable model that will lay the groundwork for a future system of preschool development and expansion. This vision brings together local providers, public schools, families and community-based support services in the promise of a high quality preschool experience as the foundation for a successful education for all of our children.

SECTION F: ALIGNMENT WITHIN A BIRTH THROUGH THIRD GRADE CONTINUUM

(F)(1-2) Alignment within a Birth through Third Grade Continuum

Note to Reviewers: We are combining our response to [F(1)] and [F(2)] because much of DEEC's internal and collaborative work and investment has been across the age range from birth through about age nine, or in education terminology Birth through Grade 3 (B-3).

Massachusetts has long embraced a B-3 Continuum as a comprehensive statewide approach to support, develop, and assess programs and services for younger children, their families, and their communities. Our B-3 agenda is built upon the understanding of the unique learning and developmental trajectories of children, which is supported by a body of research with an emphasis about the long term effects of positive experiences during the earliest years of life. Our development of a comprehensive B-3 policy agenda is a means to increase transformative learning opportunities, especially for hard-to-reach and at-risk children and families, increase the capacity of local and state entities to provide high quality educational and other services to children and their families, and enhance alignment between both current and future education

and comprehensive programs to increase outcomes for children and strengthen families while improving the workforce and leadership in the field.

Systems Alignment: State and Community Level

The B-3 policy agenda is an ongoing process that was established by the establishment of the **MA Executive Office of Education** to guide development of a more cohesive system, incorporating early education, K-12, and higher education.

This work has been immeasurably aided through Massachusetts' participation in an early learning policy academy hosted by the National Governors Association (NGA) Center for Best Practices. In June 2013, Massachusetts and five other states were selected to develop and implement new policies aimed at enhancing early education standards, assessment and educator effectiveness, and also strengthening partnerships with key stakeholders. Massachusetts' primary goal was to develop and implement a B-3 standards and assessment *system* by: (a) identifying the foundational experiences and essential competencies that will lead to college and career success; (b) enhancing our early learning standards; and (c) exploring developmentally appropriate assessment strategies for birth through kindergarten as well as the early elementary grades.

The NGA Policy Academy team includes cross-sector representation from DEEC, DESE, and DHE; and representatives from higher education and advocacy and educational agencies. The MA NGA Policy Academy team developed a document entitled *Building the Foundation for College and Career Success for Children from Birth through Grade 3*, [**Appendix A.1.1**]. This document is aligned with Massachusetts' *2013 Definition of College and Career Readiness* which identifies the knowledge, skills, and essential qualities that should be demonstrated by students who are truly college and career ready [**Appendix F.1.1**]. The competencies in the *Building the Foundation* document are the precursors for knowledge, skills, and qualities identified in our 2013 definition of college and career readiness, reinforcing the importance of establishing a strong foundation for future success by starting at birth as well as the necessity of developing specific B-3 strategies.

In addition to this state-level work, DEEC has invested funds from the MA RTTT-ELC in 13 communities to support alignment across B-3 learning environments under *RTTT-ELC Birth to Grade Three Community Grants*. Six communities began their work in 2012 and seven joined in spring of 2014. Partners include LEAs, community-based organizations, Head Start, local social service and home visiting agencies, and city partners such as public libraries. Four of these communities are among the five LEA partners in this grant application. Activities include: (a) shared professional development for teachers and administrators; (b) improving administrator knowledge about early childhood education; (c) engaging hard to reach families; (d) improving transition pathways; and (e) improving systems for sharing formative assessment data as students move across learning environments. Many of the communities receive funding from other sources such as district, foundation, or other grants, to support their work. Some of the communities will have developed systems that can continue without substantial financial investment. The work around building strong pathways, partnership and collaboration takes less to sustain once relationships and momentum are established. The communities will be able to use the data they have gathered and the progress made in their community to apply for other funding streams to support additional work in building B-3 systems.

As part of its efforts to leverage ongoing initiatives and build on best practices, DEEC will integrate both *Building the Foundation for College and Career Success for Children from Birth through Grade 3* and the documented lessons of the *RTTT-ELC Birth to Grade Three Community Grants* into the Learning Community and statewide activities detailed in [E(5)].

Data System Alignment: DEEC and B-20

Interoperable Data Systems: MA Early Childhood Information System (ECIS) and State Longitudinal Data System (SLDS). The Commonwealth's RTTT-ELC award has enabled continued development of the MA K-12 SLDS and is funding the development of the state's ECIS. The ECIS will incorporate all data elements essential for data-driven decision-making across state agencies responsible for children's health development, kindergarten readiness and success in early elementary school. It will be fully interoperable with the SLDS and include the capability to link with data systems from other state agencies that provide services to vulnerable

families with younger children. The ECIS went into production as an enterprise system in 2013. In July of 2013, early childhood education and program data from DEEC flowed to DESE and EOE and into the SLDS. Also in 2013, 37 new reports including on early warning indicators, workforce demographics, program quality trends, child waitlist data and licensing.

Knowledge transfer from the ECIS project team to full time EOE staff will be conducted in 2015 to foster sustainability and ongoing support and maintenance. If more funding was available for ECIS, end user training could be conducted and the report suite could be expanded to meet other agency needs. All existing reports and the data exchange with DESE for the Longitudinal Data System, EdWIN Analytics, will continue after the grant period is completed.

DEEC, five participating LEAs, and the 12 DEEC-licensed ELPs will leverage the ECIS and SLDS to capture program and child-level outcomes, as described in the reporting requirements in [E(4)], informing statewide policies that support more than 10,000 DEEC-licensed programs and informing the Commonwealth's decisions to expand its Preschool Expansion model.

Coordinating with High-Quality Community and Online Resources. Family engagement is identified as one of the seven principal goals of the MA Preschool Expansion Plan as described in [A]. DEEC has invested considerable under both the State Budget and its RTTT-ELC plan to reach more families, leverage community resources, and develop high-quality content that promotes school readiness. Some infrastructure and resource examples include:

Coordinated Family and Community Engagement (CFCE). DEEC funds this investment in a statewide network of school districts and community agencies focused on strengthening the capacity of families to promote the optimal development of their children. Grantees deliver targeted outreach, particularly to families with multiple risk factors and/or who are hard to reach, and key CFCE grant work is summarized in [B(5)]. All five Preschool Expansion target communities in this proposal provide CFCE services.

Brain Building in Progress. This broad public/private strategic communications campaign is hosted by DEEC, two United Ways, and an expanding group of community and individuals. Anchored in the science of brain development, its purpose is to raise awareness of the critical importance of fostering the cognitive, social and emotional development of young children by emphasizing its future impact on the economic prosperity of everyone in MA [*Appendix B.1.2.*]. Brain Building in Progress is engaging early education providers, parents and families, museums, libraries, and legislators across the state. These partners include the 89 CFCE programs across the state that have direct access to families through programs such as playgroups, literacy hours, and home visits. We have developed significant resources with associated guidance organized by stakeholder area (legislative, educator, family, etc.) that are publicly available through our central website, www.brainbuildinginprogress.org.

Museum/Library Project. Utilizing MA's RTTT-ELC funds, DEEC partnered with the Boston Children's Museum to engage over 100 libraries and museums in a statewide strategy to provide a shared framework and set of resources that will increase the capacity of museums and libraries to support the optimal development of all children through intentional family engagement activities and early learning opportunities. The partnership is focusing on four areas in supporting family and community engagement in child development: early literacy, school readiness including preparation for Kindergarten, interest and awareness of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math), and public awareness of the importance of early education and care through the state's *Brain Building in Progress* communications initiative.

Resources for Early Learning for Educators. DEEC, in partnership with the WGBH Educational Foundation, created Resources for Early Learning, a media-rich website of educational resources (including curricular and instructional tools in STEM, English Language Arts, and social and emotional development), to help support adults who teach, nurture, and care for children from birth to age 5.

Resources for Early Learning for Parents. The Resources for Early Learning website (described above) is also directed at parents of children ages birth to 33 months and 3 to 5

years. *Parent Activities* provide quick, easy, and fun activities for families and ten short *Parenting Education Videos* with advice, tips, and suggestions on how to enhance children's learning. Videos are organized in two age groups: birth to 33 months and 3 to 5 years.

SECTION G: BUDGET AND SUSTAINABILITY

(G)(1) Use the Funds from this Grant and any Matching Contributions to Serve the number of Eligible Children in its Ambitious and Achievable Plan Each Year

In developing a budget model to ensure that each community, no matter their own individual characteristics, would be able to implement high-quality expanded preschool classes, DEEC focused on giving LEAs flexibility to adjust for their different circumstances through a block grant-style structure. Based on an assumption of \$15M in funding each year, and accounting for the 5% statewide infrastructure we assumed an allocation of \$14.25M available for implementation of the grant at the district level.

To avoid using outdated Census data to determine four year old populations, DEEC used current enrollment data of children in kindergarten in each of our five LEAs to approximate the number of eligible children in each district. Birth trend data in each community was also evaluated and supported this assumption as a reasonable benchmark for future preschool demand. Using these values, the full \$14.25M allocation was pro-rated and distributed based on the communities' shares of the total eligible 4 year-old population and, finally, adjusted by a \$4M ceiling on Boston and a \$1.5M floor for Holyoke to provide adequate support to meet the need of each participating community.

To meet the implementation requirements described in earlier sections, each community's distribution was further adjusted with 5% carve-outs for both Administration and Evaluation of the grants at the local level. The assumed administrative burdens for LEAs include implementation costs, budgeting and planning costs as well as monitoring and general oversight of grant activities performed by local partners. The Evaluation funding will be used by LEAs for their joint participation in a longitudinal study that will study the delivery of high quality

preschool programs and their impact on child outcomes This study will also inform systemic changes for the state-wide early childhood system over time. Combined, these carve-outs make-up approximately 10% of the community's allocated amount.

After accounting for these requirements, the remaining funds will be allocated for the delivery of high quality preschool services (direct services) which accounts for 90% of the funding, an expression of our commitment to efficiently administer this program. Direct services are anticipated to go to Subgrantees as a block to cover all costs and expenditures related to the operation of high quality preschool classrooms including but not limited to: teacher salaries, comprehensive services as outlined in this application, outreach efforts to families and students in each district, inclusion activities, family engagement, professional development, etc.

To determine the number of students to be served in each community, DEEC used the Foundation Budget Rates per Pupil from Chapter 70, the state's elementary and secondary school funding formula. This number is then increased to \$16,500 to account for the needs the targeted population will require including low income student support, supplemental special education services, supports for English language learners, etc. Boston's per student cost was then further increased by \$2,000 to capture the wage factor adjustments related to the city's cost of living compared to the other participants of this grant.

Based on the assumptions above, the estimated number of children served annually in our proposal is as follows:

Children Served	City
198	Boston
78	Holyoke
129	Lawrence
156	Lowell

195	Springfield
755	Total:

As required by the terms of the grant, LEAs and Subgrantees will have the opportunity to determine the most cost efficient manner to deliver these direct services through the negotiation and establishment of an MOU with DEEC and between each other when funds are awarded. [Appendix C.1.1.]. In addition to the federal award, the Commonwealth has other sources of funding it can dedicate to this effort. The State's SFY 2015 final budget included a new \$1M line item expressly to support the expansion of high quality preschool opportunities for 4 year old children, including children with disabilities and children who are English language learners (dual language learners), in an effort to provide them with a strong foundation for learning, and ultimately improve their opportunities for educational success in the early grades.

This grant has the following priorities:

- Support schools and districts with MA DESE's Level 5 designation in the expansion of preschool programs for four year old children; and
- Support schools and districts, in coordinating and collaborating with community-based early education and care programs, to enhance the quality of the learning opportunities provided to 4 year old children in a manner that is sustainable and replicable by other districts and communities in the Commonwealth.

This opportunity will be used to support districts seeking funding to support expansion of preschool opportunities for four year olds and increase the quality of those learning opportunities to promote improved outcomes for young children. Applicants would need to demonstrate that the expanded preschool program operates for at least a full school day with priority given to applications that demonstrate full-day (8+ hours/day) and full-year programming; and collaboration with community-based programs to extend the schedule to meet the needs of working families.

The SFY15 budget also includes another substantive investment in district preschool programs by removing eliminating the cap on preschool enrollment that could be counted in the state's school district funding formula, known as Chapter 70. Previously the formula capped the number of preschool students that a district can count toward its foundation enrollment at twice the number of special education preschoolers enrolled in the district. Lifting this cap for FY15 was estimated to immediately invest up to \$14.7M in districts already operating Pre-K classrooms. In SFY14, even without this change, \$33M was spent through Ch. 70 on Pre-K students,

When considered together, both the K-1 Grant program as well as the uncapping of Chapter 70 demonstrate the substantial financial commitment the Commonwealth is making in supporting new preschool and Pre-K classrooms.

These targeted funds are in addition to Child Care Quality Grant, a resource that promotes school readiness, school success, and positive outcomes for children by supporting and enhancing the quality of services being delivered to children in early education and out-of-school time settings across the Commonwealth. Specifically, the goals of the Child Care Quality Grant are to:

(1) Improve the quality of services delivered to high needs children. "High needs children" is defined as children who have two or more risk factors linked to poor school and life outcomes:

- Children and parents with special needs;
- Children whose home language is not English;
- Families and children involved with multiple state agencies;
- English language learners;
- Recent immigrants;
- Children with parents who are deployed and are not living on a military base;
- Low-income households;
- Parents with less than a high school education; and
- Children who are homeless or move more than once a year.

- (2) Improve early education and out-of-school time program quality and child learning environments by helping programs achieve and maintain national program accreditation through the NAEYC, or National After-School Association through the Council on Accreditation;
- (3) Enhance the skills of early education and out-of-school time practitioners through increased access to professional development opportunities;
- (4) Provide specialized training for bilingual and bicultural consumers;
- (5) Improve outreach and communication to improve the engagement of families in programs and/or support children's successful transition from programs to kindergarten; and
- (6) Improve child learning environments through the purchase and implementation of educational curricula, instructional supports and technical assistance that enhance the quality of the program and support upward movement in QRIS.

These grants come from a renewable funding source as they are supported by the Child Care Quality Fund, which was established in 1997, and is supported by revenues received from the sale of MA "Invest in Children" license plates. In FY14 we distributed over \$1M to 40 early child care programs in the Commonwealth.

(G)(2) Coordinate the uses of existing funds from Federal sources that support early learning and development.

As the state's Early Learning agency, DEEC coordinates and assists with the distribution and oversight of a number of preschool-related funding programs. Title I of ESEA is also known as Title I Preschool Funds, which are administered by DESE.

Part C of IDEA, also known as Early Intervention (EI) in Massachusetts, is administered through DPH in collaboration with DEEC. The DEEC-funded CFCEs refer parents and families with children under 3 years old to Early Intervention (EI) services, if necessary. DEEC staff

participate in an Interagency Coordinating Council that focus on aligning DEEC's work with that of EI work.

Section 619 of Part B, the Early Childhood Special Education Grant is managed by DEEC and provides funds to school districts and charter school districts to build capacity and to ensure that eligible 3, 4, and 5 year-old children with disabilities are appropriately identified as eligible for special education and receive developmentally appropriate special education and related services designed to meet their individual needs in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act - 2004 (IDEA-2004) and Massachusetts Special Education laws and regulations.

As noted above, Massachusetts Head Start (HS) programs support the development and implementation of a system of high quality early education. As part of the Commonwealth's CCDF plan, DEEC and DESE have collaborated to develop common core frameworks for infants and toddlers, and preschool children that align with the national common core. Head Start programs in MA allow for young children in low-income families to receive high-quality services and programming. This is a direct correlation to the work that is being done with the Preschool Expansion Grant. The resulting frameworks were adopted by the Boards of both agencies. DEEC also ensures that licensed-exempt providers, such as public school preschool programs, seeking to provide early education and care services through the DEEC contract or voucher program must agree to meet all health and safety requirements, as a condition of receiving any funding from the Department.

Four of our partner communities (Boston, Lowell, Springfield, Holyoke) for this grant proposal are currently eligible and receiving McKinney-Vento funding through DESE. Much of this funding goes to transportation of students and the Commonwealth provides \$7.35M in state funding to support communities that are transporting homeless students. DEEC coordinates federal, state and local investments and resources to support early childhood special education, transitions and inclusion under Part B of Section 619.

(G)(3)Sustain the high-quality preschool programs provided by this grant after the grant period ends

As we consider different avenues for sustaining the growth in access that this grant will create, the Commonwealth has a number of avenues for continuing this venture. One of these, is the Commonwealth's Pay for Success (PFS) initiative. In January, the Patrick administration announced the launch of the nation's largest financial investment in a PFS initiative, which is designed to improve outcomes for almost one thousand of at-risk young men in the probation system or leaving the juvenile justice system.

This initiative will allow a local non-profit provider service provider, to serve these young men in 15 communities, providing intensive outreach, life skills and employment training that will reduce recidivism and help these young men become assets and resources in their community. This PFS Social Innovation model will include success payments from the Commonwealth, and from the U.S. Department of Labor, which awarded the Commonwealth a first-of-its-kind PFS grant of \$11.7M in September 2013.

The second project Commonwealth is also in the process of developing two additional PFS initiatives. The first will provide stable housing and supportive services to several hundred chronically homeless individuals and aims improve their well-being while also reducing emergency shelter and Medicaid costs. The second to be funded in this manner is designed to make an impact on the state's 16,000 person waitlist for adult basic education programs and English-language classes, with the goals of improving employment outcomes, increasing transitions to higher education, and reducing reliance on safety net programs. Three MA nonprofits contracted to rapidly expand access to those programs, as part of a \$15M initiative fueled initially by outside investments to form a public-private partnership to address this need.

Massachusetts has an advantage due to the many strong early education programs, institutions of higher education, financial industry infrastructure as well as historic business community involvement and advocacy on behalf of education issues in the Commonwealth.

We will be encouraging each district to make connections to this work with their local business communities either through funding considerations supply or space donation or other forms of

assistance. DEEC will also actively engage with foundations and other third-party funders that have shown past interest in this work to support this initiative with additional funds.

The matching fund commitments mentioned above, both the growth of the K-1 Grant program and the continued support of districts through an uncapping of Pre-K within Chapter 70 are key to the sustainability of this initiative. Both represent real-dollar support from the State Legislature and are designed to foster growth in districts.