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PROJECT SUMMARY/ABSTRACT

- Project Title: *VA Ready: Strengthening Virginia's B-5 System for Kindergarten Readiness*
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VA has significant momentum for a strong ECCE system that prepares all children, regardless of background or zip code, for kindergarten. Across the state, local leaders have built public-private systems of collaboration across ECCE programs and are designed to meet the needs of area families. These communities provide a mature testing ground for innovative solutions to refine and scale proven strategies statewide. The Governor and First Lady have made ECCE a signature issue, and the VA legislature and business sector prioritize ECCE as essential for building a talented workforce. Given this momentum, PDG enables VA to build the capacity of state leadership; deeply understand families' needs, the landscape of ECCE programs, and effective quality improvement supports; ramp up supports for community efforts; and deliver efficient, responsive, and coordinated policies and programs for at-risk children B-5.

In building out its system to meet the needs of the most vulnerable families, VA faces several major issues that will be addressed through the PDG. 1) VA lacks a clear sense of the overall quality of ECCE and what supports are most meaningful to providers, compromising efforts to successfully design and implement improvement strategies. Through PDG, VA will complete quality inventories including baseline assessments in 1,000 publicly-funded classrooms across 10 diverse communities to deeply understand the quality landscape, especially for infants and toddlers, and determine which improvement supports are most helpful. 2) VA's ECCE system needs a sturdier foundation for scaling, as it currently lacks unified standards and expectations, programs have varying capacity to implement effective teaching practices/curriculum, and families have limited access to information to find quality services that meet their needs. Through PDG, VA will develop unified standards to guide program implementation, develop curriculum and teacher capacity, and provide tools to maximize parental choice and knowledge. 3) While general recognition of the issues related to access, affordability, quality, and availability exist, gaps exist in nuanced clarity on how to overcome barriers, particularly for culturally/linguistically diverse families. Through PDG and building on a significant strength, VA will work deeply with 10 Mixed Delivery Pilot Communities as partners in designing effective models to maximize parental choice and knowledge; share best practices among ECCE professionals; reward leaders and teachers for improving quality; and improve the coordination, collaboration, financing, and efficiency of ECCE systems. The lessons learned and models developed can then be scaled statewide and sustained using existing funds more efficiently and effectively, a key part of the planning and capacity building funded through PDG.

Ultimately, PDG will accelerate VA's development of an equitable mixed delivery system that delivers stable, affordable, and quality ECCE for the state's families and children, particularly those who are most vulnerable and will benefit the most. In so doing, VA seeks to make significant progress toward the prioritized outcome of preparing children for kindergarten, putting them on track for success in school and in life.

VA’S VISION FOR ITS B-5 SYSTEM VA’s vision for its B-5 mixed delivery system is both grounded both in a commitment to significantly increase the kindergarten readiness of all low-income and disadvantaged children in the state by 2022, as well as in the practical realities of a state that limits its Governor to one four-year term. Given the frequent turnover of the state’s Chief Executive, VA’s vision must put communities at the center of any responsive, system-wide, sustainable ECCE reform effort. Accordingly, VA envisions a network of communities across the state that deeply understand the experiences of children B-5 and their families—regardless of program type—and work in concert with the state to improve those experiences.

VA’s vision is that by 2022, every community will have a local ECCE system in which:

- All children, especially those who are at-risk or disadvantaged, have access to ECCE opportunities that support their healthy development and kindergarten readiness.
- Families are meaningfully informed and engaged to support their children’s learning and development. Parents make choices about services based on their strong understanding of child development, kindergarten readiness, and user-friendly information about their options.
- Site leaders (directors and principals) understand the essential elements of quality, measure them in classrooms, support teachers with feedback and aligned tools, and continuously improve through use of data. Effective educators have access to affordable options for continuous learning and professional development and are rewarded for their achievements.
- Communities’ ECCE leaders collaborate to reflect on their results; share and disseminate best practices for family engagement, enrollment, and quality improvement; and ensure that all relevant revenue streams are utilized efficiently and effectively toward the common goal of delivering stable, affordable, comprehensive, quality ECCE services to support at-risk children’s kindergarten readiness and families’ needs.

- The ECCE system is integrated with health, mental health, and nutrition services so that families are connected to a broader array of health, mental health, food security, and social services such as home visiting, medical home, developmental screening, nutrition programs, etc. For families, access to services will be seamless and provided in their language, respectful of their culture, and aware of potential trauma they may have experienced.
- The state provides backbone infrastructure offering clear standards and expectations, ongoing measurement and responsive data systems, and resources targeted to the most vulnerable communities and populations that only the state can provide.

To achieve this vision, PDG will build on existing and essential building blocks in community-level capacity, integrating diverse parts of the ECCE system, addressing funding inadequacies, and ensuring a full range of related services for families in four ways:

1) VA will better understand which children are accessing which programs. VA's services are not reaching all vulnerable children, and a lack of data infrastructure has limited VA's ability to clarify service coverage and gaps. The state has made meaningful strides toward solving that problem, but PDG will enable important progress.

2) VA will discern the quality of experiences children are having in 1,000 classrooms across ECCE settings, prioritizing those utilizing public funding and serving at-risk children birth to three where gaps are greatest. Research is clear that the quality of teacher-child interactions is most predictive of improved child outcomes; unless the quality of interactions and other essential quality elements are measured and acted upon, VA cannot achieve its goals. Moreover, if VA wants to drive continuous improvement for all vulnerable children B-5, it must support all providers to make incremental but important progress and reward them when they do.

3) VA will deepen the state’s knowledge of and expertise in overcoming hurdles presented by inadequate and complex ECCE financing, addressing the differences in cost structures between public and private settings, and pursuing opportunities for more effective collaboration among ECCE programs. Efforts to improve quality in ECCE settings will be ineffective if providers cannot sustain those quality services or if families cannot afford them.

4) Finally, VA will increase its expectations concerning ECCE quality and access, family engagement, and school transitions and then ably support communities’ unique leadership, activities, and approaches to meet those expectations.

The Current Landscape of VA’s B-5 Early Childhood System. There are currently approximately 512,000 children birth to five in VA. Of these, roughly 100,000 are accessing publicly-funded programs including child care subsidy, Head Start, pre-K (VPI, VPI+, Title I), early childhood special education (ECSE), early intervention services (EI) (all summarized below in Table 1) with approximately 10,000 children and their families served through home visiting programs including Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV).

Table 1. Summary of Children B-5 Served by Key ECCE Programs in VA

	VPI	VPI+	Title I	ECSE (Part B)	Head Start	Early Head Start	Child Care Subsidy	EI (Part C)
# of Children Served	18,023	1,441	4,524	19,224	12,670	2,452	10,769	19,072
% Eligible Served	48%	4%	12%	63%	36%	5%	10%	63%
Age Served B-5	4	4	4	2-5	3-4	Prenatal - 3	B-3	B-3

Coming out of VA’s ECCE system, approximately 90,000 children enter kindergarten each year, of which only 60% are fully ready with the literacy, math and social skills needed.

Key Policies and Programs. To date VA’s ECCE system has been supported primarily by federal programs with limited state investments; Table 2 shows summary of key programs.

Table 2. Summary of B-5 Funding for Key ECCE Programs in VA

Service	Program	Source	Amount
Home Visiting	MIECHV	Federal	\$ 21,290,852 (2016)
		State	\$ 832,946 (2016)
Early Care and Education (ECCE)	Head Start	Federal	\$128,260,089 (2017)
	Early Head Start	Federal	\$15,000,000 (2018)
	Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG)	Federal	\$161,451,988 (2018)
	Title I Preschool	Federal	\$26,300,000 (2018)
	VA Preschool Initiative (VPI)	State	\$70,950,500 (2018)
Children with Disabilities	Early Identification (EI) - IDEA Part C	Federal	\$23,125,911 (2018)
		State Special	\$28,648,839 (2018) \$17,156,473 (2018)
	Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) – IDEA Part B, Section 619	Federal	\$8,300,000 (2018)
		State	\$41,710,907 (2018)
Food Security and Nutrition	CACFP	Federal	\$58,789,079 (2018)
	SNAP	Federal	\$166,000,000 (2018)
	WIC	Federal	\$51,578,192 (2018)
Health and Mental Health	Medicaid	Federal	\$355,280,402 (2017)
		State	\$362,914,833 (2017)

In addition to these programs and funding, VA has initiatives and partnerships that support parent choice, stakeholder input, quality improvement, program collaboration, and performance measurement relevant to PDG potential, including:

School Readiness Committee. The School Readiness Committee is a statutorily-created group of 30 high-level leaders from executive and legislative branches, higher education, business and ECCE (described further under Organizational Capacity and Management), designated as the state’s State Advisory Council (SAC) under the Head Start Act (*note: the School Readiness Committee will hereafter be referred to as SAC*). In addition to its diverse membership, Virginia’s SAC has several workgroups that engage experts as they develop recommendations for policy and practice in priority areas. The SAC will play a key advisory role in PDG activities.

University Partnerships. VA values the assets of well-regarded state institutions of higher education with a wealth of resources, tools, and models that support policies and investments and/or effective teaching and learning to positively impact young children. One example is:

- The VA Kindergarten Readiness Program (VKRP). Starting in 2019, VA will measure the kindergarten readiness of every child entering public kindergarten. VKRP, developed at University of Virginia (UVA), provides a comprehensive picture of each student's kindergarten readiness through assessments that address literacy, numeracy, and self-regulation. These data help educators, families and communities support young students' learning during the kindergarten school year and beyond. This information, in aggregate, highlights the achievement gap at kindergarten entry, providing insight as to which children could benefit from additional supports and services. UVA and other academic partners will support PDG activities, overseeing key activities and advising the Performance Evaluation.

VA Early Childhood Foundation (VECF). Founded in 2005 to serve as private partner to VA's public sector in sustaining an unwavering focus on the importance of school readiness for VA's vulnerable children, VECF has been at the forefront of driving innovation and emphatic attention to access, quality, affordability, and equity for VA's B-5 system. VECF has incubated and piloted a number of promising initiatives that are relevant to this grant including:

- Mixed Delivery Grants. Key to putting communities at the center of the state's early childhood reform efforts is the Mixed Delivery grant program. Administered by VECF since 2016, the grants support communities in designing well-functioning, adaptive and collaborative systems for serving at-risk preschool children in a mix of public and private classrooms. The competitive grants provide funding to increase capacity of private providers to deliver state preschool services, implement innovative strategies, collaborate with other

ECCE programs, and increase responsive, affordable access for families in need. In addition to expanding services, the grants are designed to encourage the strengthening of local infrastructure, and grantees are regularly convened to receive technical assistance and share best practices for successful implementation and expansion.

- Smart Beginnings. The Mixed Delivery grants build on VA's Smart Beginnings initiative, a locally driven network that creates community commitment to school readiness by bringing public and private leaders together to collaborate on priorities for their youngest citizens. Teams of leaders coordinate effective early learning, health, and family support services for young children in their communities, improve services by promoting high quality common standards and evidence-based practices, and create efficiencies and leverage funding to ensure that the community's resources are targeted to children with greatest need. Smart Beginnings provides a sound foundation to support, scale and sustain PDG activities.
- VA Quality. Co-led by VECF and the Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS), VA's quality rating and improvement system called VA Quality has been at work in family day homes, child care centers (both public and private), Head Starts, and schools since it was first piloted in 2006. Recently revised to be less burdensome and more sustainable, the program supports quality improvement in approximately 25% of eligible ECCE programs. PDG will draw from and inform improvements to the system's own process of continuous quality improvement as an asset for VA's B-5 ECCE system.

Progress, Success, Hurdles and Challenges. Governor and First Lady Northam are making ECCE a priority for VA. They have appointed the state's first ever Chief School Readiness Officer whose charge is to work across agencies, with the private sector, and with communities to drive statewide improvement in kindergarten readiness by increasing access to and improving

the quality of ECCE experiences, especially for vulnerable children in publicly-funded programs. In addition to working closely with the SAC, they created a Children's Cabinet consisting of cross-agency executives and chaired by the First Lady, which is charged with improving the quality of and access to ECCE, supporting workforce, and ensuring that VA maximizes resources to increase kindergarten readiness. Finally, VA's elected officials have strengthened their commitment to ECCE; they have invested in educator scholarships for competency-building coursework, commissioned a groundbreaking study to analyze ECCE, made significant investments in VPI and other ECCE programs, and charged agencies to provide more trauma-informed services and explore innovative practices such as ECCE integrated funding.

VA's committed leadership, growing momentum for ECCE reform, and a growing number of engaged communities building successful systems will allow it to make headway in the year ahead and set itself up for even more ambitious progress by 2022.

That said, serious hurdles remain which will be addressed in part through PDG:

- 1) Access to Services. As demonstrated in Table 1, ECCE programs serve only a small percentage of eligible children, with the largest gap for infants and toddlers. This gap is exacerbated by the fact that 67% of Virginia children under five have all available parents in the workforce. Even with special education where families are guaranteed access, roughly 63% of eligible children are served when compared with elementary school identification rates.
- 2) Lack of Information on Quality. VA lacks a clear sense of the overall quality of ECCE and what supports are most meaningful to providers, compromising efforts to successfully design and implement improvement strategies. Only 17% of the subsidy programs are in VA Quality, meaning that infant and toddler families have scant information to guide their choices. Participation rates are higher with Head Start (70%) and VPI (30%) but still limited.

3) Fragmented System. VA's ECCE system lacks unified standards and expectations, consistent program capacity to implement effective teaching practices/curriculum, and complete access to information for families to find quality services that meet their needs.

4) Impact on Most Vulnerable Children. The number of children in families with multiple risk factors is growing and Virginia lacks nuanced clarity on how to overcome barriers, particularly for culturally/linguistically diverse families, those in poverty, and with high levels of trauma.

The challenges ahead are too fundamental to be resolved in a single year. However, VA's commitment is that it can and must make strides each year, and 2019 will be a year of major progress for the state. With committed leadership at the state level and a growing number of communities actively engaged in building successful systems, VA will be well poised to scale statewide through 2019 grant achievements. VA's commitment to and vibrant partnerships across key partners addressing continuous improvement will allow it to make headway in the year ahead – and set itself up for even more ambitious progress in the years to come.

ACTIVITY ONE: B-5 STATEWIDE NEEDS ASSESSMENT VA will make prudent use of the opportunity to complete a Needs Assessment in the earliest months of the PDG term. In addition, VA will position the Needs Assessment as an initial step in a coordinated series of activities that lead to progress in building a cohesive, practical, data-informed B-5 ECCE system.

With a proposed budget of \$200,000, the Assessment will clearly identify the current status of key components and capacities of VA's B-5 ECCE system and, more importantly, respond to questions about its gaps and opportunities. The process will yield critical insights from system "users" about their experiences, providing meaningful and actionable information to fuel VA's Strategic Plan for improving its ECCE system. As VA strives to improve kindergarten readiness

for VA's most vulnerable children, the Needs Assessment will ensure actions stem from a base of solid evidence regarding the current landscape including disparities (ethnic, racial, geographic, socioeconomic) and gaps (in access, quality, affordability, financing, infrastructure, and data).

Key Terms. One of VA's first tasks will be to update and unify definitions of relevant key terms in line with VA's B-5 priorities. In preparation for the PDG grant, VA will forge consensus among disparate versions and stakeholder interpretations, and propose agreement – to the greatest extent possible - on common definitions. VA's Chief School Readiness Officer and VECF, drawing from the extensive body of VA reports and analyses available across programs and disciplines, will craft and propose definitions for consideration to the SAC, seeking its endorsement by December 30, 2018. In this way, by the beginning of the PDG term, VA will have functional and relevant definitions for *Kindergarten readiness*, which will include attention to children's skills and abilities as well as community context; *Quality early childhood care and education* (ECCE), including a range of classroom and/or program elements; *Availability*, including attention to accessibility and affordability; *Vulnerable or underserved children*; and *Rural*. This important work will serve our broader focus of creating a shared vision for a high quality B-5 mixed delivery system, aid the alignment of policies and processes that undergird VA's B-5 system, and maximize the 12-month PDG period by starting with a strong foundation.

Populations of Children Who are Vulnerable or Underserved, including Rural. The Preschool Development Grant (PDG) Needs Assessment will build on the lessons of VA's School Readiness Report Card, a mandated biennial deliverable by the VA Early Childhood Foundation (VECF) in VA's Appropriations Act.

The October 2018 report outlines sobering socioeconomic, racial, ethnic, and geographic disparities in statistics from risk indicators at birth through high school graduation. According to

the most recent data available for each of the following statistics, there are approximately 512,000 children B-5 in VA. About 32% of VA's young children are in low-income families (under 200% Federal Poverty Level or FPL), while an average of 15% of young children live in poverty (under 100% FPL), with 7% in deep poverty (under 50% FPL). Since many risks are associated with child poverty, this single indicator can best illustrate overall risk disparities. The estimated poverty rate for black children (29%) was nearly quadruple the rate for non-Hispanic white children (8%); the rate for Hispanic children (26%) more than triple the non-Hispanic white rate. More than 13% of children are food-insecure. While the B-5 statistic is not readily available, 17% of children ages 5-12 speak a language other than English at home.

Disparities in risk and academic achievement are also persistent relative to where children live. Recent data from the Center for American Progress show that 40% of VA's population live in child care deserts; more than half (53%) of Virginia's rural counties are child care deserts. Two-thirds of young children in rural communities reside in child care deserts, which means restricted access to ECCE for families with young children in rural areas of VA. A similar VA report found that the supply of child care for infants and toddlers is insufficient to meet the need, as is the supply of care for children with disabilities, especially in rural communities. Of providers who indicate that they can serve children with disabilities, not all are able to serve children who require higher levels of accommodation.

Plan to Fill Gaps. The Needs Assessment will be specifically designed to shed light on aspects of VA's B-5 system that are important and relevant to different stakeholders. VA's priorities for gleaning insights will include clearer understanding of 1) demographics of children and families served, underserved, and unserved in VA programs; assets and gaps in available services for specific populations including those in poverty, with linguistic/cultural differences, in rural

communities, with special needs or having experienced trauma; 2) capacity for measuring, improving, and monitoring program quality and availability; 3) opportunities and gaps in professional development for ECCE educators and administrators; 4) deficiencies and gaps in ECCE facilities; 5) inadequacies and inefficiencies in ECCE financing; and 6) strategies and practices to improve transitions to kindergarten.

The Needs Assessment will emphasize the strengths and weaknesses of VA’s data and analysis systems and clarify essential strategies needed to improve them to better inform policies and investments toward increased kindergarten readiness. VA has held extensive planning sessions with community, academic, and governmental practitioners over the last two years resulting in increased general knowledge of the availability of data, areas where additional research is needed, and emerging consensus on what is needed to support an informed ECCE system. As such, research for the Needs Assessment will focus on gaps in understanding to advance these areas. Data to be considered as part of the PDG Needs Assessment include:

Topic	Key Data Points
Child population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summarize populations of children who are vulnerable or underserved • Document the number of children in rural areas • Summarize changing demographics resulting in more B-5 low-income and English Language Learners (ELL)
Quality and availability of services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify gaps in information available to and assess the experiences of parents as consumers of ECCE • Analysis of quality and availability of ECCE, particularly for vulnerable children, underserved children, in rural areas and child care deserts • Gather data about the quality and availability of programs and supports for children B-5, particularly infants and toddlers • Gather data about gaps in services for children with special needs, who have experienced trauma, or whose families are transient (e.g. homeless, migrant) • Determine availability of linguistically and culturally sensitive services • Document availability and capacity of local infrastructure to support planning and implementation of quality and access improvement strategies
Educator preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify gaps in teacher preparation, credentials, skills and compensation across setting and ages • Determine gaps in availability and accessibility of educator preparation, including gaps between costs of preparation education and compensation

and supports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Synthesize differing expectations for professional development, gaps on effectiveness of professional development, and impact on child outcomes
Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze costs related to facilities as available from Market Rate Survey and other existing materials • Document real estate availability and pricing in child care deserts and other underserved areas
Funding and financing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze barriers related to financing, and opportunities to make funding and policies more responsive to the needs of communities and providers • Develop realistic cost models for public/private sector providers • Analyze duplication and inefficiencies
Transitions and academic opportunity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify challenges and opportunities in supporting the transition into kindergarten from the full range of early childhood settings • Summarize Kindergarten readiness assessment data (VKRP, PALS-K), 3rd grade assessment results • Synthesize elementary school accreditation data

The Process of Developing the Needs Assessment. VA will be strategic in accessing relevant data; a synthesis of the rich body of recent reports, evaluations, and data insights will accelerate the work. The Chief School Readiness Officer will coordinate efforts across all public agencies to fill in gaps in data, leveraging the Children’s Cabinet to ensure full cooperation and support across agencies. Recent legislation in VA requires and enables all agencies with the Health and Human Services Secretariat (including the Departments of Health, Behavioral Health, and Social Services) to share data.

VECF will oversee the Needs Assessment concurrently with the Strategic Planning process by contracting with a highly experienced contractor with deep VA roots and expertise to design and conduct the synergistic work. The Needs Assessment and Strategic Plan processes will be advised and overseen by the SAC and in particular, the Impact Workgroup. As data are collected in the Needs Assessment, findings will be shared with members to help refine and shape VA’s approach to a more coordinated, efficient, and responsive B-5 Mixed Delivery system.

Needs Assessment Work Plan and Timeline
Month 1: Finalize SAC charges, roles, and scope of assessment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SAC establishes Impact Workgroup to guide Needs Assessment

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generate targeted research questions, consulting with both Impact Workgroup and evaluation team, that builds from the table above
<p>Month 2: Collect and synthesize data outlined in the table above, identify gaps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create synthesis of available administrative sources and preexisting reports • Identify gaps and assets in local and regional capacity in ECCE quality and access and in state and local capacity to successfully transition children to kindergarten • Identify substantive areas where primary data collection is needed to best understand needs • Review and share findings of best practices on federal and state needs assessments
<p>Months 3-4: Finalize insights and analysis from unduplicated count of children in care and identify underserved wait lists for vulnerable or underserved populations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce report on numbers and scope of vulnerable and underserved populations • Determine how to gather missing data; including collecting new data as needed from primary sources such as surveys, focus groups, and other means
<p>Month 5: Identify and prioritize research and service gaps, barriers to financing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect information and input on barriers to financing and analyze results to inform recommendations for state funding policies
<p>Month 6: Refine recommendations; finalize Needs Assessment report and draft outline of state plan to address gaps; release</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cull research, facility, transition, financing, and service gaps from research and draft major findings and state recommendations to SAC • Provide report on data findings and state recommendations to SAC

Other State and Federal Needs Assessments. The Strategic Plan will draw on previous reports and analyses including the School Readiness Report Card, VECF’s biennial analysis of 10 key indicators of risk and academic achievement for VA’s children released in October 2018; a report of the statutorily-created Integrated Early Childhood Fund workgroup released in October 2018 with recommendations about improving early childhood financing; an October 2018 VDOE report on potential improvements to VA’s preschool program; a 2017 report on the quality of VA’s ECCE services by the Joint Legislative Audit & Review Commission; a 2017 report from the Child Care Underserved Area Workgroup; a previous needs assessment conducted by James Madison University; local and regional early childhood strategic plans (including those participating in the Smart Beginnings and Mixed Delivery grants described in this application); Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) State Plan; MIECHV State Plan; State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) required by the U.S. Department of Education’s Office

of Special Education Programs; results of implementation of the original PDG, including data on classroom and instructional quality, child learning outcomes, and the supports needed to sustain quality; a report on the feasibility of using social impact funding to support home visiting; and a report on the spending of the additional CCDF dollars.

Unduplicated Count of Children Being Served and on Waiting List. VA has been developing the capacity to utilize and integrate data available from VA's Longitudinal Data System (VLDS) to more clearly understand and identify which children are served in which programs or combinations of programs, and which children are unserved or underserved. As an important step in accessing actionable information, VA has contracted with a research team to produce a report providing distinct counts of children in services and programs using data currently accessible through VLDS. The counts will be derived by race, age, gender, and location; each combination of the selected early childhood services will be identified over multiple time periods. The analysis will also produce tools for aiding evidence-based early childhood program decisions. This deliverable is scheduled for completion by December 2018 and will provide information on children's access to services that has not previously been available to decision-makers. PDG Needs Assessment activities will enable VA to build on this new capacity and improve VA's granular information on children unserved and/or on wait lists.

Identifying Key Indicators of Progress. VA's Needs Assessment will support the goal of discerning the most important, measurable indicators of progress that could be used to track the ultimate progress of the Strategic Plan and accompanying efforts. The PDG team of expert partners and consultants will collaborate on each step of the process from Needs Assessment to Strategic Plan to implementation of Pilot activities to performance evaluation, ensuring that VA maximizes the opportunity to conduct, learn from, and act on the Needs Assessment.

ACTIVITY TWO: B-5 STATEWIDE STRATEGIC PLAN The development and assertive dissemination of VA's statewide Strategic Plan will galvanize stakeholders around a plan of action to unify and strengthen a B-5 mixed-delivery system that puts families first. The plan will build on accomplishments and assets of the state to set a direction for its ECCE system and will use information emerging from the concurrent Needs Assessment to design and build a durable, cohesive system that will take solid root in 2019 but will emerge more fully in scope, scale, and capacity over the next several years. Most critically, the Strategic Plan will firmly establish a unified vision and set a reasonable number of clear, realistic and achievable goals with a Dashboard of trackable indicators that will be overseen and monitored by the SAC.

Process for Strategic Plan. VECF and the Chief School Readiness Officer will facilitate the Strategic Planning work concurrently with the Needs Assessment activity, drawing extensive support and synergy from the contractor who will be conducting both processes and producing both deliverables (as discussed in Activity One). The SAC and its Impact Workgroup will also play an important advisory role and VA will ultimately use this forum to publicly track progress against the Plan. Note that altogether the budget of the Needs Assessment, Strategic Plan, and additional analysis (described at end of section) as well as related personnel, supplies and travel for both activities will total \$824,178.

The state will solicit feedback from a broader set of stakeholders through both in-person and online formats. Feedback solicitation will be designed to ensure that non-English speakers and low-literacy individuals are able to participate and contribute. Specifically, \$28,000 in PDG funding will support 10 community-level roundtables to do a deep dive into gathering diverse local perspectives as well as a retreat for the SAC (full description in Stakeholder Engagement section that follows). These focused conversations will inform VA's Strategic Plan and actions

that will be implemented in Activities 3 and 4. Lastly, the plan will be drafted, presented to the SAC for its endorsement and then broadly disseminated. At that point VA will pivot from strategic planning to strategic implementing, creating a “Dashboard” of the state’s key indicators of progress to be used by the SAC and general public to track progress.

As discussed in Activity One, VA’s Needs Assessment and Strategic Plan processes will be accelerated by leveraging a rich body of recent reports and Strategic Plans, including the Virginia Chamber’s Blueprint 2025, the state’s economic competitiveness plan, as well as analyses from the recent volume of public and private efforts and investments in ECCE in VA. A synthesis of these materials will help ensure the Strategic Plan incorporates all new or updated federal, state, and local priorities and statutory requirements. The Strategic Plan will address five areas critical to unifying VA’s ECCE system and preparing more children for kindergarten:

Strategy	Description
Unifying Expectations	Developing clear expectations for children, teachers, and programs will require streamlining administrative infrastructure and addressing systemic disconnects, including learning and development standards; health, safety and quality expectations; program quality ratings; and leader and teacher qualifications across funding streams B-5.
Empowering Local Communities	VA believes strongly in the role of community-level action led by public and private actors, with a key state role being to support the capacities of community-level decision-making, coordination across program types, implementation of Pilot strategies, and continuous quality and access improvement. Community leaders should assess public and private resources and needs including explicit acknowledgments of gaps in services, and make decisions about resource deployment and delivery models to meet the ECCE needs of their population, and play a leading role in improvement planning.
Supporting Teachers	Improving instruction in existing programs through better curriculum, assessment, and professional supports (including classroom observations) is critical to achieving better child outcomes. The state needs an aligned pathway of teacher qualifications, make access to those qualifications affordable, and support teacher retention through compensation and improving working conditions, among other factors.
Rewarding Performance	Programs, program leaders, teachers and communities who have success should be honored and rewarded for that success.

Strategy	Description
Informing and Engaging Families	The state should ensure families are supported to make informed choices about all existing ECCE options, including supporting local capacity to build connections among providers, building user-friendly websites and other tools to inform family choice, coordinating enrollment processes to make it easier for families to apply and supporting families and children, especially from disadvantaged families, to make a smooth transition into kindergarten.

The Strategic Plan will address these issues in the context of key indicators of progress for VA, explaining how proposed activities will drive improved performance on them.

Through partnership with UVA and other academic and research advisors, VA will ensure that its vision, goals and indicators 1) reflect the most current evidence-based policies and practices and 2) are logically designed to drive desired outcomes, and 3) can be measured efficiently, consistently and accurately in order to track progress.

While the Plan is being finalized, VECF and the Chief School Readiness Officer will begin to engage a branding and marketing firm who will design a brand and a dissemination plan to build awareness of ECCE in the state – and of the Plan, once adopted. This dissemination plan will engage the Governor and First Lady; members of the legislature; state and local public and private agencies; representatives from the business sector; philanthropy; leaders from local/regional coalitions; and ECCE program, school, and family networks. The dissemination activities will begin in force with the Strategic Plan’s release, and will coalesce VA’s many constituencies and stakeholders in the growing momentum, urgency, and opportunity to transform its system. The First Lady will continue to be an ambassador for the ECCE efforts and, depending on the timing, the Governor and First Lady will promote the vision and plan as part of the annual back to school tour across the state, thus attracting media interest. This transformation will be signified by a recognized brand that is understood, owned, and honored through sustained

commitment to equitable, affordable opportunities for improved kindergarten readiness for children in families and communities across the Commonwealth.

Partnership Opportunities. Stakeholders and partners will be engaged throughout the Strategic Planning process. Specific partnerships will be nurtured to improve collaboration, coordination, policy alignment, program quality, and serving children across ECCE programs B-5. At the state level, the state will strengthen inter-agency and public-private partnerships, using the planning process as an opportunity to set or refine shared goals. Specific partnerships that will be leveraged and strengthened through the Strategic Planning process include:

- VA Chamber of Commerce and local chambers statewide, to bring additional awareness and support to ECCE as a workforce development strategy and important aspect of VA's economic competitiveness.
- VA community colleges and universities, who have collaborated to facilitate affordable pathways for ECCE educators to access stackable credentials that articulate seamlessly from associate to baccalaureate programs specific to competencies for supporting learners B-8.
- VDSS, VDH and VECF, currently working on a campaign to expand access to healthy meals for children in ECCE through increased participation in Child and Adult Care Food Program.
- Diverse association stakeholders with a keen interest and stake in ECCE, including, for example, the VA Child Care Association, the VA School Board Association, VA Association of School Superintendents, VA Education Association, VA Metropolitan League and VA Association of Counties, and the VA Council on Private Education, who will support the planning process and promote the resulting Strategic Plan.
- VA's foundations and philanthropic organizations, who have formed venture partnerships to build synergies across their assets and investments in priority areas including ECCE.

As the Needs Assessment and Strategic Plan are developed, the Chief School Readiness Officer, VECF and the consultant will identify other partnership opportunities based on topic area. For example, a leading advocacy organization, Voices for Virginia's Children, just launched a Campaign for a Trauma-Informed Virginia, which will culminate with a summit next spring. VA will leverage partnership opportunities like these to promote the vision and goals of the plan. The primary venue for identifying, strengthening and tracking these partnerships will be the SAC and its Impact Workgroup; partnerships will be essential to ensuring VA develops a sound, feasible and impactful Strategic Plan and can rely on partners to achieve shared goals. Ultimately, VA will seek to turn these partnerships into endorsements, leveraging the collaborative work to get a broad set of leaders to publicly indicate their support of the plan.

Stakeholder Engagement. VA's Strategic Planning process will engage a full range of stakeholders, building from the vigorous interest and participation in local, regional, and statewide ECCE issues and opportunities across VECF's public-private coalitions in communities across the state; VA's 135 school divisions; a diverse array of ECCE providers; health practitioners, systems, and associations; maternal health, home visiting, and infant/toddler services; food security and nutrition programs and networks; trauma-informed care task forces; regional economic and workforce development initiatives; business and local chamber groups; and more dedicated stakeholder groups. The resulting Strategic Plan will be all the more sound, effective, and collectively owned because of the expansive outreach and engagement activities across diverse stakeholders.

However, the most essential and valued engagement and insights will be from VA's parents and families. With the rich variety and diversity of communities across the Commonwealth, the articulation of the unique assets and needs of at-risk families with young children will most

keenly inform a plan of action that will result in VA's ability to design, build, and sustain a durable B-5 system that can ensure kindergarten readiness for all of VA's vulnerable children.

Cost and Feasibility. As noted earlier, VA has produced extensive analyses and reports on ECCE in recent years. Yet none represent a shared public-private vision for unifying and strengthening ECCE nor establish strategic goals that will result in improved child outcomes with specific measures of success for each goal. Moreover, these reports often champion aspirational goals that are too expensive, difficult to implement at scale, impossible to measure, or infeasible for the full mixed-delivery system. To ensure that VA's Strategic Plan is achievable, measurable and meaningful, VA will take extra steps to analyze the cost, data and outcome implications. First, VA has budgeted \$50,000 for VECF to contract with a financing expert to estimate the costs implied in the strategic goals. For example, if VA proposes a certain credential for all ECCE professionals, the individual will help estimate the short and long term costs, down to the classroom level, of such a strategy so that these estimates can be shared with the SAC and other organizations as they are considering the Strategic Plan. Second, VA has also budgeted \$50,000 for VECF will contract with an outside data system expert to ensure the Plan fully covers the data infrastructure needs. Without a sound early childhood integrated data system (ECIDS) for capturing data about key indicators over time, particularly as VA scales its pilots, there will be no way to track progress statewide. Finally, VA will work with UVA and the evaluation team to ensure that the success measures are both meaningful and measured in the most cost effective and accurate way. Specifically, they will advise on the Dashboard – what indicators it should track to drive the most impact and how that information should be presented and measured. Simply put, they will help ensure that progress against the Dashboard means that

outcomes are improving in VA. As part of this process, the team will help VA refine its PDG Logic Model as needed, checking it against the final Needs Assessment and Strategic Plan.

Month	Strategic Plan Work Plan and Timeline
1	Set timeline and assign responsibilities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultants develop work plan and provide overview of process to committee • Committee generates list of stakeholders and documentation to review
2	Collect and synthesize policy and service recommendations and identify gaps <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create synthesis of relevant documentation and reports on gaps/needs/assets in service coordination, quality, educational and funding policies • Identify areas for environmental scan (i.e., policies, regulatory procedures, federal trends) • Collect and synthesize reports and recommendations from community pilots • Conduct meta-analysis of existing plans that address parts of VA system
3	Draft early findings of research, themes, and recommendations for statewide plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create draft of definitions and suggested indicators, policy and service priorities, based on available reports and data, for stakeholder feedback • Complete environmental scans to inform direction
4	Engage stakeholders <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solicit feedback from a broader set of stakeholders, including two approaches – in-person and online. VECF will conduct 10 in-person roundtables around the state to discuss the preliminary findings of Needs Assessment and strategically inform Strategic Plan • Building on VECF’s deep relationship with the network of Smart Beginnings entities and communities statewide, events will engage families; elected officials; local business, community, philanthropic and faith leaders; school superintendents, principals, and school board members; prek and kindergarten teachers; Head Start grantees; leaders from services including Medicaid, CHIP, and home visiting; local departments of social services; tribal leaders; immigrant advocacy organizations; child care and family day home administrators and teachers; and families in thoughtful discussion on what Virginia families and children need and how Virginia can better address those early childhood needs. • Roundtables will also engage public and private leaders of the organizations that support the early childhood sector including health, community service, mental health, housing, professional development, special needs, advocacy, and other community-based organizations • At the same time, VECF will post findings online and solicit feedback electronically. VECF and Chief School Readiness Officer will work across public and private channels to get the word out and to solicit feedback
5	Refine stakeholder feedback and hold SAC retreat <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on information gathered, VECF and Chief School Readiness Officer, working closely with Children’s Cabinet and SAC Impact Workgroup, will identify existing efforts to improve coordination and collaboration, and engage diverse leaders to ensure the Plan strategically identifies ways to improve

	coordination, collaboration, and more efficient and responsive implementation of services in a more unified system <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold retreat to set vision, goals, strategies, and indicators • With extensive input from stakeholders, VECF and the Chief School Readiness Officer will conduct a SAC retreat • Draft and vet Strategic Plan • Create mock Dashboard for key indicators and determine data sources
6	Publish Strategic Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan is endorsed by SAC, approved, and submitted to funder for approval • Dashboard template is finalized with staff assigned

ACTIVITY THREE: MAXIMIZING PARENTAL CHOICE AND KNOWLEDGE VA’s

strategy for better engaging families has a dual focus: 1) harnessing community capacity to work with and support parents and 2) building statewide systems to provide families with better information about choices and to measure parent satisfaction. With an overall budget of \$2,267,187, VA will effectively equip 10 Pilot Communities to unify and align their local ECCE system and develop models to effectively engage and empower families in their important roles as well as build a data system that can help scale these efforts. Specifically, VA will pilot a system for gathering access and quality information to inform parental choice as well as a family satisfaction survey to track engagement and satisfaction over time. At the end of the grant period, VA will have initiated deep and lasting change in 10 priority communities and, at the same time, distilled important lessons and built valuable tools that will be used to maximize parental choice and family engagement statewide.

The Pilots will be central in VA’s determination to deeply understand opportunities, barriers and hurdles that exist for families to access quality ECCE experiences. Competitively selected communities (which may be single or multiple jurisdictions) will receive \$575,000 in funding to describe levels of access to services down to the classroom and child level – particularly for vulnerable and underserved children and also the level of unmet need. This will involve:

counting all sites, classrooms, children served (and numbers on wait lists) as well as identifying any gaps in financing or facilities; conducting Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) observations in every infant, toddler and preschool classroom; inventorying quality elements (such as curriculum use and characteristics of teachers) about all publicly-funded classrooms; describing the level of quality of ECCE across the spectrum; and documenting how services can continue to be improved. Using \$57,500 in PDG grant funding, communities will conduct focus groups to convene stakeholders to identify ways to maximize parental choice and help parents navigate the system more easily, recognizing that reasons may vary from neighborhood to neighborhood and that factors including but not limited to cost may impact accessibility and availability. Communities will also leverage existing reports of local conditions such as Head Start needs assessments. Across these inputs, communities will further identify and articulate financing issues and gaps that burden both providers and families.

These 10 communities will form the backbone of VA's approach to maximize the information parents have available to inform their choices, and support their active engagement in their child's development. Specifically, VA will 1) develop nimble models that address the nuances and complexities of maximizing parental choice for vulnerable, culturally and linguistically diverse families, 2) identify barriers and challenges and create more efficient, coordinated, and collaborative systems locally, and 3) persist in its systems development approach and leverage local experiences to develop durable, rigorous models that can be effectively scaled statewide.

Collaborate with Stakeholders to Reach Families. VA's goals include the commitment to develop strategies and systems needed to more deeply and authentically engage families, build trusting relationships, and maximize parental choice. VA will build on VECF's experienced

administration of Mixed Delivery grants, left in technical assistance, and sound existing relationships by providing PDG funds to 10 existing Mixed Delivery grantees to serve as PDG Pilot Communities (hereafter referred to as Pilot Communities or Pilots), adding responsibilities supported with the aforementioned supplemental funding to:

- *Convene ECCE partners* including leaders from home visiting, family child care homes, child care centers, early intervention, health (including Medicaid and CHIP), Head Start, schools, and health and mental health fields
- *Determine collaborative and innovative strategies* to improve families' streamlined access to affordable, high quality comprehensive services, simpler enrollment procedures, and communities' collective capacity to promote healthy development and kindergarten readiness
- *Deeply and authentically engage families* through organizations' in-person focus groups, a tailored family survey, and existing channels (e.g., family events, social media, web).

The Pilot Communities will be required to develop a local plan for collaborative action to successfully implement responsive and durable local delivery systems, including strategies such as “no wrong door” approaches that provide parents with useful information to inform decision-making. Communities will self-assess their current enrollment, engagement and kindergarten transition processes and work with the state and fellow communities to share best practices and identify ways to improve. Communities will describe how they will leverage existing federal and state investments and cultivate collaboration among ECCE programs and schools to improve quality and provide access to a continuum of programs and services that address needs and opportunities for children and their families. As it relates to transitions, communities will develop or refine plans for improving transitions into kindergarten from all ECCE settings.

Design a Program Profile for Families. VA will deploy UVA to work with the 10 Pilot

Communities to develop and test an ECCE Program Profile format that will provide access and quality information for each and every program within the mixed delivery system. VA will work with ECCE programs to catalogue the full array of parental options down to the classroom level, including a range of quality elements such as teacher credential, ratio and group size, use of curriculum, inclusive practices and quality of teacher-child interactions. With \$920,705, UVA will leverage an existing statewide data system (PALS) to build out the technical infrastructure, support site leaders to gather and input data, and ensure that families can access these Program Profiles. UVA, VDOE, and VECF will support communities as they explore how to present this information in an accessible, meaningful way to families to expand parental choice and knowledge and improve decision-making.

Insights gleaned from this activity will position VA well to consider policy and process changes needed to ensure that families can better access information about existing ECCE programs. Building the data infrastructure will ensure that Virginia can quickly scale.

Conduct Family Survey. In close partnership with Pilot Communities, UVA will receive \$202,000 to design and conduct a family survey that covers two areas 1) how families search for, choose, and perceive ECCE opportunities and 2) how families perceive kindergarten readiness. Parents will be asked about their priorities, approaches to navigating the ECCE system, challenges faced and satisfaction with their programs as well as their understanding and needs related to supporting their children to be ready for and transition to school. By including key demographic information, the survey will also provide insight on the perspective of vulnerable populations, including fathers, parents who speak a language other than English and families of children with special needs. VA will be well positioned to use the tool statewide, both as a local resource to strengthen engagement and as a statewide measure of family experience with ECCE.

Technical Assistance to Ensure Success. The state will ensure that all of the intensive work described above will accomplish stated goals, reflect VA’s statewide priorities, and be feasible for scaling statewide. VECF will provide extensive technical assistance to these communities to:

- Build effective community leadership, governance structures, and formalized agreements to establish and sustain a durable local/regional B-5 ECCE system that meet families’ needs
- Conduct focus groups and other engagement methods to glean insights and information from key stakeholder groups, especially vulnerable families
- Gain increased granular understanding about families’ preferences, needs, barriers, concerns, and hopes for kindergarten readiness and then design solutions that meet families’ needs
- Persist to better understand the differentiated ECCE needs of families, especially those in poverty, rural communities, and/or child care deserts; those with special needs or having experienced trauma or who are English Language Learners; those seeking services for infants and toddlers or during non-traditional work shifts
- Design and implement single point-of-entry or coordinated enrollment systems that help increase access and improve satisfaction
- Engage stakeholders on the community’s Strategic Plan, goals, and vision
- Accurately gather the access and quality data across the wide range of ECCE settings to share with families and support choice, as well as to inform VA’s actions for data collection, management and use to inform policies, programs, and investments.

As always, while intensively focused on Pilot Communities’ support and success, VA will draw lessons from this cohort to inform policies and future work and to build a runway for replication in other communities as VA advances statewide implementation by 2022. Altogether

the personnel, travel and supplies budget for Activity 3 is \$450,905 of which half will support technical assistance to the field.

State Level Collaboration to Maximize Parental Choice. At the state level, the Chief School Readiness Officer, with the support of the Children’s Cabinet, will coordinate efforts across VDOE (school-based pre-K and early childhood special education [Part B]); VDSS (CCDF and the Head Start Collaboration Office); VDBHDS (early intervention [Part C]); and VDH (health, home visiting, and nutrition programs). Agency leads will be charged with two responsibilities.

1) help coordinate communication and ensure that local affiliates in the 10 Pilot Communities are fully engaged in family engagement activities; 2) support communities by helping Pilot leaders coordinate and maximize public resources and implement best practices. Ultimately, this guidance, along with the Pilot approaches, will help inform a Community Guide to be used to assist communities across the state strengthen family engagement. The SAC and Impact Workgroup will also play a role, examining the efforts piloted and offer recommendations.

Rapid Dissemination of Family Toolkit to Support Kindergarten Readiness. At the same time as Pilots, VA will be implementing the VKRP, its new kindergarten readiness assessment, statewide. VA will use insights learned from Pilots to immediately inform the development of a family toolkit as VKRP rolls out statewide. Previously, school divisions used multiple tools with inconsistent or no supports for families. Now all 90,000 VA children entering kindergarten will be assessed using the same tools addressing literacy, math, and self-regulation skills. VA has the opportunity through PDG to develop tools for families to engage and support them more broadly around what kindergarten readiness is, how it is measured, and how to best support their children’s successful ECCE experiences and transition to school. With a budget of \$61,077, UVA will leverage the insights from focus groups and surveys to help ensure that the messages,

methods and tools of this toolkit will be understandable, accessible, and useful for VA’s diverse families, including those with children with special needs and English Language Learners. Using the VKRP website, coordinating across partners, and using all available outreach channels, VA will disseminate the family toolkit statewide in multiple languages. This toolkit is an example of how the deep, local work with families will inform statewide impact beyond the grant year.

Month	Maximizing Parent Choice and Knowledge Work Plan and Timeline
1-12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide intensive supplemental funds and supports Pilot Communities for ambitious additional responsibilities including conducting classroom counts and quality inventories, assisting with family surveys, toolkits, etc.
3, 6, 9, 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement intensive technical assistance sessions for Pilots on timely issues for feedback and training including surveys, standards, etc.
2-4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft family survey and implement feedback activities • Train Pilots on data system
3-11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pilots develop plans and implement classroom inventory activities
4-5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Release family survey in multiple languages, closed, and results analyzed
6-8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft, vet, and refine Program Profiles
3-7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft, vet, release and disseminate family toolkit on kindergarten readiness in English & Spanish to help families promote children’s learning and development
9-11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct focus groups, record results, share with state, analysis
9-12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce Program Profiles for all Pilot Sites

ACTIVITY FOUR: SHARING BEST PRACTICES VA will address one of the central problems of the ECCE field: there are practices that research shows are beneficial to children, but existing systems of professional support do not help educators across the B-5 mixed delivery system engage in those practices on a consistent or sustained basis, nor reward educators who do. With a nearly \$10M PDG investment, VA will define, share, and use best practices in ECCE and redesign state policies supporting the professional development system so educators, (and because of VA’s previous weighted emphasis on services and educators for 4-year olds - especially those serving children B-3), are well supported and able to deliver quality services. Most distinctly, VA will pilot an incentive program, providing \$2,500 incentives to leaders and

teachers willing to integrate best practices into their daily work. This unique initiative will increase the number of providers able to implement best practices, especially in infant and toddler classrooms, and help level the playing field so less-well-paid providers can gain skills comparable to those better compensated.

VA's plan to share best practices among its ECCE providers will include two strands of work: state-level work guided by the SAC to better define and align the best practices that should be promoted statewide, including the use of unified standards and instructional tools; and supporting the 10 Pilot Communities (see Activity Three) to redesign systems and enable widespread implementation of the identified best practices and standards. The state will capture lessons learned from local implementation and use them to reduce duplication of effort, align resources to improve program and educator quality, and improve overall efficiency. As VA's centerpiece PDG "proof-of-concept," Activity Four's proposed cost is \$9,945,558.

Defining and Aligning Best Practices at the State Level. To maximize the impact of sharing best practices with ECCE educators across the state, VA will create incentives and supports to expand those practices across the system. VPI+ and recent investments in VPI, as well as national changes to Head Start, have focused attention on the use of early learning standards, evidence-based curricula, assessment tools, the use of classroom observations, and child data to shape individualized professional development. While these practices can have a big impact, successfully implementing them in diverse ECCE settings can be challenging due to such factors as staff turnover, inequitable financing and inadequate compensation.

VA defines expectations through its learning standards, which articulate the expected outcomes for children, and the competencies which define the capacities ECCE educators are expected to have to help children achieve optimal skills. Refining these expectation-setting

documents is therefore essential to support ECCE programs in delivering quality at scale. VA will honor the voice of diverse providers by engaging them in refining these aligned and updated best practices. VA will work closely with its research partners to ensure the standards and competencies are refined and implemented in ways most likely to improve child outcomes.

Aligning VA's Standards Birth-to-K. To establish a unified set of early learning and development standards birth to five, VA will conduct a competitive bid process to select an academic expert to lead the process of updating and aligning those standards. Program leaders and educators will be actively engaged in the redesign effort; their expertise will be called on extensively to ensure the standards are culturally responsive and can be used by all VA children and classrooms, including Head Start and those that serve children with special needs and English Language Learners. The contractor will conduct stakeholder engagement sessions to solicit input and build an online training module and train-the-trainer toolkit to ensure the revised standards gain traction. The revised standards will be disseminated to institutions of higher education and to nonprofit and for-profit training providers to ensure alignment within teacher preparation programs and across adult learning and professional development systems. The expected budget for this is \$130,500.

Once the early learning guidelines have been updated, VA will revisit and update its professional standards as needed to align intentionally with the child-level standards. In addition, the state will use the new standards and competencies to guide its reviews and approval of curricula in use across the state, providing local ECCE leaders with detailed guidance regarding the extent to which the curricula they are using are aligned with state standards.

Direct Support for Providers to Implement Best Practices in 10 Pilot Communities. VA will then leverage its local capacity to implement identified best practices by supporting the 10 Pilot

Communities in redesigning professional development to ensure that early educators have the knowledge and skills needed to help children thrive. PDG funding in the amount of \$4,681,968 will be used to convene diverse providers in the 10 Pilot Communities to promote collaborative professional development -- including training and coaching -- particularly for those in publicly-funded programs, focusing on the core components of strong practice. For all teachers and instructional leaders within the Pilot Communities, this will include:

Topic	Goal
Standards	Content of the unified early learning and development standards
Curriculum	Using evidence-based curriculum with fidelity to promote individualized learning and development of all infants, toddlers and preschoolers
Screening	Using developmental screening and embedded assessment to flag concerns, individualize instruction and engage with families
Measuring Quality of Interactions	Implementing CLASS assessments to improve interactions and instruction and use feedback and coaching to build on strengths and address concerns
Kindergarten Readiness	Understanding what Kindergarten readiness is, how it is measured and how teachers and families can support children to enter school ready

This funding will provide stipends and other resources to leaders, coaches, and teachers to ensure they are compensated for the time needed to share and apply this content. Combining support for sharing best practices and measuring classroom quality elements (especially in infant and toddler classrooms) will enable VA to analyze the relationship between high quality professional development and positive impacts on children in the long run.

Strengthening Collaboration and Efficiency. The Pilot Communities will create more intentional collaboration across programs within communities, including Head Start, VPI, child care, etc., to maximize program resources, share best practices, and strengthen collaboration and partnership. In addition to improving practices focused on teaching and learning, the 10 Pilot Communities will be supported to work with programs to improve their practices in leadership, management, and finance. Topics to be covered may include best practices in financial

management; leveraging multiple funding sources; reducing duplication through shared service models; accessing community and state supports to facilitate collaboration; supporting transitions for children who move among ECCE services; and supporting transitions to kindergarten.

Capturing Data on Leader and Teacher Perspectives and Impact. To understand the impact of sharing best practices among providers, UVA, with \$133,750 in PDG funding, will survey a diverse sample of ECCE teachers and program leaders to gauge how these educators understand and utilize state learning standards, curricula, professional development supports, and guidance on kindergarten readiness. The surveys will build on insights from VA's 2017 Workforce Survey and include questions about program leadership, professional development, compensation, turnover, and access to professional development, credentials, and coaching. Survey data will be used to inform future improvements for the profession and enable tracking of how these investments affect teachers' and directors' perceptions and practices over time.

Incentivizing Child Care Leaders and Teachers to Implement New Practices. The impact of collecting, refining and disseminating best practices will be limited unless educators and leaders are encouraged to incorporate them into their daily practice. VA has budgeted \$4,537,500 to pilot a unique financial incentive program to reward leaders and teachers who apply best practices over a sustained period of time and partner with the state to reduce teacher and administrator turnover. Leaders and teachers in 10 Pilot Communities will be asked at the start of the grant period to provide their demographic information, highest credential earned and current compensation. At the end of the grant period, they will certify that they are still working in the same facility, provide proof of employment, and document measurable improvements.

Partnerships and Opportunities for Collaboration and Coordination. Coordinating activities and distilling lessons learned across these efforts will be important. As noted earlier, VECF and

VDOE will work through the Children’s Cabinet to ensure all state agencies understand the innovative work of the Pilots and how they can support the expanded implementation of best practices. The SAC, particularly its Impact Workgroup, will play a key role in guiding and approaches and monitoring achievements of the Pilots and grant activity. VECF and VDOE will present findings throughout the year to the SAC. This information will be valuable to integration with the Head Start Collaboration Office, Resource and Referral Agencies, and agency heads for other relevant early childhood programs, all of whom who are represented on the SAC.

In engaging programs to address these issues, the 10 Pilot Communities will receive technical assistance from VECF. In addition to supporting the work directly and facilitating collaboration among the communities, VECF will engage with researchers to capture lessons from the communities that can be distilled into a statewide guidance (see Activity 5) on best practices. The SAC will be actively engaged in considering those lessons and how they can best be used to inform state policy and applied statewide. The goal is to establish an exchange of ideas and information among the Pilot sites and state-level leaders, which will inform the design of the state’s ECCE policies and support infrastructure. This cross-fertilization and sharing of best practices among local and state leaders will be one of the most important and lasting benefits of the PDG grant. Altogether the VDOE and VECF personnel, infrastructure, travel and supplies budget for supporting this Activity is \$486,840.

Month	Sharing Best Practices Work Plan and Timeline
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contract with standards expert and begin standards revision work.
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct in-person sessions
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present draft standards to SAC; post online to broadly solicit feedback; Pilots develop plans and begin to implement classroom support activities; intensive training for Pilots continues on quarterly basis beginning in month 3
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standards are finalized to go to board of education for review and endorsement

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UVA drafts leader and teacher surveys
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online training module developed; solicit B-5 curriculum aligned with standards and teacher surveys reviewed by SAC
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standards endorsed by board of education and posted online • Online orientation and training module created and launched
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standards are broadly disseminated • VDOE begins curriculum review
10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial results of curriculum review are posted online; Pilots produce plan for improving access, enrollment, transitions
11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leader and teacher surveys are closed and UVA conducts analysis

ACTIVITY FIVE: IMPROVING OVERALL QUALITY After the completion of the Needs

Assessment and Strategic Plan by the end of month 6, PDG activity in months 7-12 will build knowledge, momentum, and will for plans and strategies to improve quality statewide. With a total proposed cost of \$139,263 and beginning as soon as VA receives federal approval on results of Activities 1 and 2, VA will pursue three strategies: 1) a branding and marketing campaign to broadly promote VA’s vision, build will, and establish channels of communication among relevant stakeholders for improving the quality of ECCE, 2) development and testing of a statewide Dashboard to enable careful monitoring of progress of PDG implementation and lessons about impact and potential of quality improvement by the SAC and other stakeholders, and 3) the design and production of a community guide to facilitate replication of PDG strategies and quality improvement activities in the 10 Community Pilots, with an eye to scaling across the state. These activities will set the stage for the full implementation of the Strategic Plan by 2022.

Brand, Market and Broadly Disseminate Plan. Once the Needs Assessment and Strategic Plan are completed, they will be disseminated and publicized statewide in months 7-12. While initial visioning of campaign and brand design will begin earlier, expenditures up to \$90,000 for development of the branding and marketing tools will begin after federal approval of VA’s Needs Assessment and Strategic Plan, targeting development and finalization of the materials by

the end of month 7, with a launch immediately thereafter. Dissemination and campaign activities will focus on coalescing broad and diverse stakeholder recognition, will, and motivation to collectively focus on, learn about, and advance VA's Strategic Plan and commitments to overall quality improvement. Venues for communications outreach to engage the full array of stakeholders interested and invested in ECCE, as well as those who haven't yet recognized the benefits of improved ECCE quality, will include regular meetings of the Children's Cabinet and SAC (as guardian of VA's state plan) to ensure endorsement, backing, and full support across agencies; the Governor and First Lady's back to school tour of communities and ECCE sites across the state in months 8 and 9; and the VECF/VA Chamber co-hosted Executive Briefing for an audience of business executives, legislators, and administration representatives in month 10.

Produce Statewide Dashboard. VA's Strategic Plan, including for overall quality improvement, will include progress metrics, and the SAC will be responsible for tracking progress in the PDG term and into future years. After the publication of the Strategic Plan and federal approval, VDOE will begin work to produce a publicly-available Dashboard that tracks progress toward the plan goals. The development of the Dashboard will include steps including a design session to produce a prototype among SAC and the Impact Workgroup to help discern the most important measures are most important to be addressed, especially related to three primary areas of VA's PDG focus: process, outcomes, and access. The prototype sketch will then be socialized among key PDG stakeholder groups and once finalized, VA will take steps to capture the relevant data. Constructing the Dashboard will be a fairly nimble process so that no later than month 12, VA will have a baseline Dashboard that presents data on the selected indicators from multiple sources in a clear and understandable one-page format. As part of this process, the VDOE will work closely with the research and evaluation partners to ensure the data are

collected and presented in a meaningful and accurate manner. VA, the SAC, and Impact Workgroup will then use the Dashboard on an ongoing basis to ensure the state continues to advance the priorities and learnings from PDG. The Dashboard will serve as not only a useful accountability resource for ECCE systems quality improvement processes leading to kindergarten readiness outcomes, but as a durable testament to the adage that what is valued gets counted. Beyond VDOE personnel and supplies, no budget is needed for Dashboard in Year 1.

Develop Community Guide. Based on the experience of the 10 Community Pilots and conducting the Needs Assessment and Strategic Planning activities, VA will produce a Guide over the course of months 7-12 to support replication in other communities of the same set of quality improvement and systems reform activities. After the completion of the state Strategic Plan, and federal approval, VECF will work with Pilot Communities and other stakeholders to synthesize and report on experiences in developing needed local capacity. VA will utilize most favored features of the VECF's "Preschool Puzzle" document published in 2013, intended to support field testing of innovative strategies to better coordinate and integrate ECCE services across diverse program types within communities.

By month 9, the Coordinator will have met regularly with Pilot Community representatives to identify and document best practices and lessons learned (successes, challenges, problem-solving strategies) from PDG activity. By month 10, a draft of the Guide will be completed and shared thoughtfully among stakeholders to receive feedback that helps improve the product to be finalized by month 12. The Guide will be a user-friendly tool in a step-by-step "how to," to share and multiply outcomes from VA's deep learning in 1,000 classrooms across 10 diverse Pilots. Beyond VECF personnel and supplies, no budget is needed for the Community Guide in Year 1.

The three strategies that will be deployed in months 7-12 through Activity 5 will make durable the valuable insights gleaned from the pioneers implementing PDG’s Community Pilots.

Month	Improving Overall Quality Work Plan and Timeline
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch marketing plan to disseminate plan and build awareness and will for ECCE quality improvement • ECIDS consultant begins work, taking Strategic Plan and high-level vision for data and comparing to “Program Profile” in order to understand what elements are missing/incomplete
8-9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feature Needs Assessment and Strategic Plan on Back-to-School Tour • ECIDS provides update to SRC • Guidebook writers work with mixed-delivery communities to identify and codify best practices and lessons learned
10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feature Needs Assessment and Strategic Plan at Executive Briefing • Guidebook writers draft guidebook and seek feedback
12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ECIDS consultant produces final deliverable, scope of work for building out phase I of ECIDS • Guidebook is finalized and released

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY AND MANAGEMENT VA believes successful PDG implementation of the vision to advance kindergarten readiness will hinge on developing further capacity of state systems, especially to ensure community success; refining processes and capacity for technical assistance; and supporting growth of expert, adaptive leadership, VA’s PDG implementation will be ably led by a team of practiced partners (VDOE, VECF, and UVA), each seasoned individuals with complementary expertise and eagerness to grow, supported by a broad set of stakeholders dedicated to VA’s opportunity to implement the vision of PDG.

Lead Agency and Key Partners for PDG Implementation. Virginia’s lead agency and fiscal agent for implementing the grant will be VDOE, which is responsible for VPI, nurturing ECCE efforts across VA’s 135 local school divisions, including those funded by Title I of ESSA, and Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) – IDEA Part B focused on children ages 2 to 5.

To implement PDG, VDOE will work closely with the

- VA Department of Social Services (VDSS), administering the child care assistance program, VA Quality, Head Start Collaboration Office, and TANF
- VA Department of Health (VDH), administering VA’s maternal and child health and home visiting programs, CACFP, developmental screening, and other B-5 health programs
- VA Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (VDBHDS), administering VA’s Early Intervention (EI) – IDEA Part C services.

VDOE will also leverage key partners for PDG:

- VECF, a public-private partnership with statutory responsibility for supporting the SAC and administering the Mixed Delivery grants. VA routinely utilizes VECF to advance initiatives that require flexibility and speed, particularly those engaging local communities. Given the urgency of completing PDG tasks within a year, VECF’s ability to move nimbly will be needed in numerous activities.
- UVA has extensive experience in research, practice solutions, and tools for ECCE that support teacher’s capacities in effective interactions with young children, observing and measuring the quality of these interactions in classrooms, developing child assessment tools and supports, and identifying policy implications for ECCE. VA will depend on UVA to serve as its trusted and high capacity research partner for its B-5 system development,

These three lead entities – VDOE, VECF, and UVA – have partnered intensively to implement the original PDG grant, called “VPI+” in VA. Their individual capacities and track record of successful collaboration will be an asset to PDG B-5 implementation. They are committed to fully leveraging relationships and collaboration with key entities including the SAC, Children’s Cabinet, Pilot Communities, and state agencies with relevant ECCE purview to seize the PDG opportunity to 1) create more efficient, responsive, collaborative, and evidence-

based ECCE systems and programs, 2) expand best practices and data strategies from the Pilot Communities to broad implementation; 3) coordinate systems and services to more efficiently and effectively serve vulnerable children, engage families, and support providers.

PDG Advisory and Support Entities. There are two cross-agency bodies that will also play leadership roles in PDG. The School Readiness Committee (referred to herein as SAC) was created by statute in 2016 and designed to ensure that a diverse set of cross-sector stakeholders (e.g., the Governor’s administration, the legislature, VECF, the business sector, higher education, early care and education providers and schools) would address the recognition that ECCE is linked to academic success and workforce readiness. The initial charge and priority of the SAC was to build a highly competent ECCE workforce through advancing an effective professional development and credentialing system for educators to positively impact Virginia’s young children. Having made solid strides in this initial goal, the SAC is now responsible for examining and guiding other essential assets of school readiness and providing recommendations to the Governor and legislature for action. The SAC will appoint an Impact Workgroup to intensively guide and advise on PDG implementation and track progress.

The second is the Children’s Cabinet, established by Governor Northam in 2018. Chaired by First Lady Pamela Northam, it includes Lieutenant Governor Justin Fairfax, Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry Bettina Ring, Secretary of Education Atif Qarni, Secretary of Health and Human Resources Dr. Daniel Carey, and Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security Brian Moran. Childhood development and school readiness are the first priority listed in the executive order creating it; the executive order specifically discusses promoting healthy pregnancies and access to quality ECCE as key Cabinet strategies. The Cabinet will play a

leading role in supporting PDG implementation, marshalling resources, and ensuring that VA's public agencies proactively support project milestones.

Responsibilities and Roles of Key Staff. Leading the work on behalf of the state will be Jenna Conway, who was appointed by Governor Northam as the state's Chief School Readiness Officer. Chief Conway is responsible for leading the state's efforts to develop a multi-year plan to improve ECCE, unifying key activities that support quality, and working across agencies and stakeholders to develop and implement a coherent approach to improving outcomes for young children. Conway brings 7 years of ECCE experience and most recently served as the Assistant Superintendent, Early Childhood for the Louisiana Department of Education, spearheading its significant systems reforms until moving to VA in the summer of 2018. Conway will have primary responsibility (at .10 FTE) at the PDG lead agency for overseeing grant implementation and ensuring the PDG permanently impacts VA's systems to sustain the impacts beyond the grant period. Conway will be supported in her lead role by experts from UVA and VECF:

Daphna Bassok, Ph.D. is an Associate Professor of Education and Public Policy and Associate Director of EdPolicyWorks at UVA. Her research addresses ECCE policy, with a particular focus on the impacts of policy interventions on the well-being of low-income children. She worked closely with Chief Conway in LA to overhaul its ECCE system. She recently received a fellowship for her work examining changes in parenting practices over time and their impact on the early emergence of achievement gaps. She will be the primary lead and evaluation partner from UVA, working closely with Anita McGinty, Ph.D. McGinty is Research Associate Professor in Curriculum, Instruction, and Special Education and newly appointed Director/PI of the PALS office at UVA. PALS is a 20-year state-wide partnership between VDOE and UVA to screen all children in VA PK-3 for signs of early reading difficulty and use the data for allocating

intervention dollars and guiding instruction. She will be lead on the activities related to gathering data at the site level about children, classrooms, teachers and quality elements and connecting this data to other data sources such as children's assessment performance and longitudinal data. These UVA experts will work with VDOE, VECF and other organizations to build a long-term research-policy partnership that will help VA measure the impact of its PDG efforts, particularly as it relates to kindergarten readiness.

Kathy Glazer is President of VECF since 2012; previously she was Director of State Services for the national BUILD Initiative, providing strategic advice to communities and states advancing their ECCE policies and agendas. From 2005-2009 she served in VA state government positions including as lead in Governor's office for early childhood policy and director of an office created to span early childhood programs, staff, and funding streams across state agencies. Most recently, she served on the National Academies' committee to develop the *Transforming the Financing of Early Care and Education* report. Her PDG role will be overall project leadership and guiding Needs Assessment, Strategic Plan, and data systems efforts.

Staffing Supports Proposed for PDG. In some cases, PDG activities and goals will be supported with PDG funds for portions of existing personnel time (without supplanting public funding). PDG grant funds will also be used to strategically provide a number of new positions within VDOE, VECF, and UVA dedicated to successful implementation of the PDG grant term with an eye to creating sustainable deliverables. These personnel, the percentage of FTE, and key responsibilities are outlined in the Budget Justification.

Expertise and Experience in Program Areas. VDOE, VECF, and UVA are well poised for PDG from long tenure and track record of excellence in service delivery, effective

administration, management, and evaluation of similar large scale projects. Current initiatives in of VDOE, VECF, UVA that align with PDG and support implementation of VA’s B-5 system:

Initiative	Description
Preschool Development Grant	VA was awarded a Preschool Development Grant Expansion Grant by the U.S. Department of Education in FY 2014. “VPI+” has provided high-quality full-day preschool to more than 3,000 low-income children in 13 school divisions.
Showcase Pre-K events	Through VPI+, 18 “Showcase Pre-K” events will offer ECCE educators to visit exemplar programs. VPI+ also provides cross-division networking opportunities for family engagement staff at trainings, leadership academies, and team meetings.
VKRP	Virginia Kindergarten Readiness Program is a set of assessments conducted during the first six weeks of kindergarten in four domains: mathematics, self-regulation, social skills, and literacy. Full statewide implementation statewide is scheduled for 2019.
Integrated Early Childhood Fund Workgroup	The VA General Assembly charged a multi-agency workgroup with developing recommendations for an Integrated Early Childhood Fund, which would alleviate the challenges communities and providers experience from the disconnects among individual early childhood funding streams. The workgroup, led by VDOE, issued a report in 2018 identifying next steps for the state in addressing this issue.
PALS	Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS) is a literacy screening tool developed at UVA and used in all pre-k-3 rd classrooms in VA. PALS includes a data system for tracking children’s progress longitudinally.
Virginia Longitudinal Data System	The VLDS manages interagency data sharing across multiple state agencies including VDOE. It was initially funded through a 2009 federal LDS grant, and offers a model as VA envisions its Early Childhood Integrated Data System.

Plan for Oversight of Federal Award Funds VDOE will be responsible for daily grant management, including oversight of the federal funds to ensure that they adhere to applicable federal and grant-specific requirements. VDOE will ensure subgrantee activities meet or exceed the plans outlined in grant project proposal. Primary grant oversight and monitoring will be the responsibility of staff hired for the grant and assigned to the Office of Early Childhood in VDOE, as well as the Chief School Readiness Officer and the Director of Early Childhood.

VDOE will manage the grant centrally, serve as fiscal agent, and issue grant awards to subgrantees. Subgrantees described in the proposal are VECF and UVA; both are experienced recipients of federal grant funds. Office of Early Childhood staff assigned to the grant will have frequent in-person and remote contact with the subgrantees and vendors to ensure compliance with grant requirements and programmatic objectives. VDOE will apply oversight and reporting

mechanisms that are standard procedures in managing federal grants with state-to-subgrantee and vendor disbursement. VDOE Fiscal Services staff will follow internal Standard Operating Procedures, Commonwealth accounting policies and procedures governing the grant funds, and applicable Uniform Guidance 2 CFR200. For procurements, standard procurement requirements including the VA Public Procurement Act will be followed, in addition to applicable Uniform Guidance 2 CFR200. VDOE staff will be responsible for quarterly performance progress reports and financial reports, working with Fiscal Services staff. VDOE grant staff will meet with VDOE Fiscal Services and Budget staff on a scheduled basis to review the grant's financial.

VDOE's online grants management system, Online Management of Education Grant Awards (OMEGA), will be used by subgrantees to submit grant reimbursement requests with accompanying description/justification. Reimbursement requests submitted via OMEGA require multiple approvals at the subgrantee and VDOE levels. Once approved, OMEGA is used to process reimbursement claims for payment and interfaces the approved reimbursements to VDOE's internal financial management system in Oracle Financials for payment. VDOE staff and subgrantees will run reports from OMEGA to track grant allocations, reimbursements to date, and remaining balances by subgrantee. VDOE's Oracle Financials system will be used to budget and track expenditures of the overall grant funds, both funds used for VDOE administration as well as subgrants. Staff will have access to run reports from Oracle Financials to track budgets, actual expenditures, encumbrances, and remaining balances by program and subgrantee. Both OMEGA and Oracle Financials will specifically isolate the PDG B-5 grant funds, segregating them from all other sources of funding. Both VDOE grant and fiscal staff will monitor the budgets, meet periodically and ensure all necessary financial reporting is completed in an accurate and timely manner throughout the entire grant period.

TIMELINE

In each section, VA has presented a detailed work plan and timeline. The overall timeline below represents a roll-up of all PDG B-5 activities with specific milestones and demonstrates that work on Activity 5 will not begin until Activities 1 and 2 are completed:

ACTION	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
NEEDS ASSESSMENT												
Finalize SAC charges, roles, and scope of assessment												
Establish Impact Workgroup to guide Needs Assessment												
Generate research questions with Impact Workgroup												
Synthesize data, existing reports; identify gaps												
Identify gaps/assets in local, regional and state capacity												
Identify where data collection needed to understand needs												
Share best practices on federal/state Needs Assessments												
Finalize underserved vulnerable populations in unduplicated count of children in ECCE												
Report on scope of vulnerable/underserved populations												
Determine how to gather missing data												
Prioritize research and service gaps, barriers to financing												
Collect input on barriers to financing; analyze results												
Refine recommendations and finalize Needs Assessment												
Draft major findings and state recommendations to SAC												
Provide report on findings and recommendations to SAC												
STRATEGIC PLAN												
Finalize timeline and assignment of responsibilities												
Develop work plan, provide overview to SAC												
Generate list of stakeholders, documentation to review												
Synthesize policy/service recommendations, identify gaps												
Create synthesis of gaps/needs/assets in service coordination, quality, educational and funding policies												
Synthesize recommendations from community Pilots												
Conduct meta-analysis of existing VA system plans												
Draft early findings: research, themes, recommendations												
Create draft definitions, indicators, policy/service priorities												

ACTION	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
	LEAD											
Complete environmental scan to inform direction												
Engage diverse stakeholders in person, online, at roundtables												
Refine stakeholder feedback and hold SAC retreat												
Draft and vet Strategic Plan												
Endorse plan; submit to ACF for approval												
Publish Strategic Plan												
MAXIMIZING PARENTAL CHOICE												
Provide supplemental funds/TA to Pilot Communities for additional relevant responsibilities												
Draft family survey and implement feedback activities												
Train Pilots on data system												
Provide intensive technical assistance sessions with Pilots												
Develop plans and implement classroom inventory activities												
Family survey released, multiple languages, results analyzed												
Draft, vet, and refine Program Profile												
Draft, vet, release and disseminate family toolkit												
Conduct focus groups, record results, share with state												
Produce Program Profiles for all Pilot Sites												
SHARING BEST PRACTICES												
Contract with standards expert, begin standards revision												
Conduct in-person sessions												
Present draft standards to SAC; post online for feedback												
Develop plans and implement classroom support activities												
Finalize standards for board of education to review/endorse												
Draft, vet, implement leader and teacher surveys												
Develop online training module												
Solicit B-5 curriculum aligned with standards												
Continue Pilots TA: training on survey results, standards, etc												
Self-assess applications, enrollment, transitions												
Standards endorsed by Board of Education and posted online												
Online orientation and training module created and launched												
Standards broadly disseminated; begin curriculum review												
Produce plan for improving access, enrollment, transitions												
Post initial results of curriculum review online												

ACTION	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Conduct analysis	UVA											
QUALITY IMPROVEMENT												
Launch marketing/dissemination plan; build awareness	VDOE											
Compare Strategic Plan, high-level data vision to Program Profile to understand missing/incomplete elements	VECF											
Share Needs Assessment, Strat. Plan: Back-to-School Tour	VDOE											
Work with Pilots to document best practices, lessons learned	VECF											
Share Needs Assessment, Strat. Plan: Executive Briefing	VECF											
Writers draft Guide and seek feedback	VECF											
Produce final deliverable, scope of work for ECIDS phase I	VECF											
Guide finalized and released	VECF											
EVALUATION												
Finalize plan for implementation reporting	UVA											
Review collection tools/methods, inc. surveys/focus groups	UVA											
Review final drafts of Needs Assessment and Strategic Plan and advise on revisions needed to Logic Model	UVA											
Evaluate potential financial outcomes of Strategic Plan and advise on potential impact to access and quality of ECCE	VECF											
Conduct mid-point check in: advise on progress vs. goals, review data, and advise on any course correction needed	UVA											
Review Dashboard, specifically whether improvements will result in better outcomes and will address target populations	UVA											
Advise on implications of family engagement data	UVA											
Advise on implications of teacher and leader survey and feedback	UVA											
Review quality of Pilot data	UVA											
Finalize strategy for long-term evaluation	UVA											

PROGRAM PERFORMANCE EVALUATION PLAN VA is committed to using PDG to build continuous quality improvement into the DNA of its statewide ECCE system. Doing so will require three key activities: 1) establishing metrics, dashboard and accompanying methodology; 2) building capacity for CQI with a strong methodological approach; and 3) leveraging new data sources to inform policy, practice and systems.

Establish Metrics, Dashboard and Accompanying Methodology At the outset of the grant, VA will set up for process monitoring grant implementation, define roles and responsibility across partners, and establish regular channels for communication and tracking progress. Pilot metrics will be developed in month 1 to monitor local implementation. VECF, working closely with VDOE, will develop inter-agency protocols for communicating expectations to Pilots, monitoring completion of tasks, addressing issues and evaluating results, and identify roles and responsibilities for all involved. VECF, along with VDOE, will conduct technical assistance sessions with Pilots quarterly so local communities can provide feedback on process challenges and state staff can course-correct, ensuring continuous learning with the field. To support VDOE and VECF staff, VA will assemble a team of evaluation partners from several of Virginia's public universities and national experts, which will be led by UVA's Daphna Bassok. As this team advises VA, they will intentionally build the skills and abilities of the personnel to drive the work forward after PDG. For example, this team, along with VDOE, VECF, and the needs assessment/strategic plan consultant will rigorously review the Needs Assessment and Pilot data monthly to inform the Strategic Plan, which will lay the groundwork for making broader systems improvements.

VA will also build long-term system monitoring metrics through developing a Dashboard to publicly track progress against the Strategic Plan in terms of process, financial and outcome

measures. This Dashboard will clearly lay out the priority areas where VA wants to make progress in an understandable, one-page format that can be used publicly to track progress over time on key access and quality indicators (which will be identified and refined through the Needs Assessment and Strategic Plan) that are expected to improve kindergarten readiness. The accompanying methodology will outline the data source(s) for each of these indicators as well as how it helps improve kindergarten readiness or related outcomes, with a focus on process, cost, and program implementation reporting.

The first version of the Dashboard, which will be manually produced by VDOE, immediately following the finalization of the Strategic Plan will serve as a baseline. This will help the SAC and general public understand the starting point. It will likely include process, financial and outcome metrics that will be measured on an annual basis. For example, while VA is scaling its Pilot efforts, it may want to track how many communities and providers are involved, noting that participation is a necessary first step to improving parent information as well as quality and access. As efforts are scaled statewide, process measures will become less important, shifting the focus to outcomes measures. Ultimately, VA hopes to shift to ensuring the ECIDS or existing state systems can automatically produce and sustain the Dashboard. VA will also create community-level versions of the Dashboard. This will not only enable communities to more closely align their efforts with the broader statewide ECCE effort but will help drive awareness, participation, and continuous quality improvement locally.

Building Capacity for CQI While the SAC is well-positioned, the VDOE, along with key partners VECF and UVA, will need to build their operational capacity to operationalize CQI within the ECCE system. In this context, CQI requires systematic data collection, regular

examination of key progress indicators, and timely refinements of policies and practices based on empirical evidence across multiple agencies and local communities. Priorities include:

More efficiently use existing ECCE data and gather and manage new data: UVA will expand current statewide data system (PALS) to capture comprehensive access and quality data across classrooms down to the zip code and classroom level; this will require technology and technical assistance to support effective usage and build out protocols for data collection, data sharing, quality assurance and ongoing management, positioning VA well for scaling this data system in future years. VA also intends to determine which of the unique identifiers for site, classroom and teacher can be connected to other data systems, thus enabling the tracking of longer-term outcomes such as improvement or turnover.

Build capacity to track desired outcomes, ranging from improved kindergarten readiness to lower teacher turnover: VA will engage national experts to map out data availability and quality of statewide ECCE systems and how this layers onto the Strategic Plan as well as the data system to inform where VA needs to make future investments.

Increase staffing capacity: Both VDOE and VECF will use PDG funding to hire staff to monitor process outcomes and build the analytical capacity within their organizations in a way that will be sustainable beyond the grant, to include building systems, protocols, and efficient means of gathering and analyzing data that will require significantly less staff time. Expertise will include managerial, coordinating and analytical skills to build strategic oversight and operational capacity. The most intensive work will be tracking the process outcomes of the Pilots, which will range from completing counts to performing community-wide tasks (e.g., self-assessment and family focus groups) to overseeing site level activities (e.g., training or classroom observations); this will be done manually initially, and increasingly automated by the end of the PDG term.

Establish CQI Check-In Structures: VA’s ambitious approach to running a Strategic Planning process and intensive local Pilots across multiple communities simultaneously will require tight oversight, constant communication, frequent check-ins, and data-driven decision-making. UVA will plan five in-person sessions for VDOE, VECF, and other key partners. These in-person sessions will be designed to not only have the group use data to evaluate VA’s progress to date, but also to advise on how to ensure that the system-building efforts underway will enable tracking of key process, financial and outcomes measures. Outside federal technical assistance experts will be accessed to participate in some of these sessions to provide external systems expertise. In addition to status checks, specific shared objectives will guide each session:

Time	Session Objectives
Pre-Launch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gain shared understanding on VA approach, Logic Model and baseline conditions and data • Establish shared criteria for the needs assessment, strategic plan and process measures for pilots • Review data system approach and design for pilots, including the extent to which pilots are reflective of VA demographics and target populations
Quarter 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree on methodology for process measures for pilots and ensure systems are in place to capture necessary data • Work with outside technical assistance experts to finalize plan for implementation reporting • Review new data collection tools and methods, including family, teacher and leader surveys and focus group protocols
Quarter 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review final drafts of Needs Assessment and Strategic Plan according to shared criteria and advise on revisions needed to Logic Model • Evaluate potential financial outcomes of strategic plan and advise on potential impact to access and quality of ECCE • Conduct mid-point check in, advising on progress against process goals, review available data to date and advise on any course correction needed
Quarter 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Dashboard, methodology and protocols for producing Dashboard and logical soundness, specifically whether improvement on Dashboard will result in better outcomes and will address target populations • Advise on family engagement data implications, from focus groups/survey
Quarter 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advise on implications of teacher and leader data, namely completion of process activities, quality inventory and survey results • Review quality of Pilot data collection and data itself, exploring the linkages between implementation fidelity and data availability and quality

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalize strategy for long-term evaluation with emphasis on outcome measures
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The UVA evaluation team, led by Bassok and McGinty, will provide fast-turnaround analyses using data from the Pilots to inform the process, specifically decision-making on statewide goals, policies and/or practices. They will review first cuts at the various sources of data and analyze the quality and utility of existing data to identify gaps. This important data will be coming in as VA sets final goals for the Strategic Plan and creates the Dashboard to track implementation progress with the SAC. Practically, VA staff will learn from this process, driving continuous learning and establish a more data-driven approach to decision-making in the VA organizations.

Ensure Strong Methodological Approach To support impactful CQI, the UVA evaluation team will employ a thoughtful methodological approach for VA’s unique strategy, summarized below:

Area	Approach
Sampling	The specific 10 Pilot Communities represent a non-random sample of divisions with the willingness to invest in system-building. Notably, within each Pilot, the evaluation sample will include <i>all</i> publicly-funded early childhood education programs including subsidized child care settings, school-based pre-kindergarten programs and Head Start. Communities who volunteer to participate, agree to reporting requirements. To the extent feasible, the evaluation will capture the <i>universe</i> of publicly-funded early childhood education in these communities. The one exception to this universality is the parent survey, which will be fielded to a sample of parents with children attending publicly-funded programs. Approximately 100 programs, stratified by program sector (e.g. Head Start, pre-k), will be randomly selected. Two classrooms will be randomly selected from each program, including a toddler and a preschool classroom where possible, and all parents in these classrooms will be invited to complete the parent survey
Data Collection	The evaluation will leverage existing data and will also facilitate several types of meaningful new data collection efforts. Key primary data sources will include (1) program-leader reported measures of program characteristics including measures of enrollment and quality which will be entered into a newly-expanded data portal (2) observational measures of teacher-child interactions, collected by local practitioners, and also entered into the expanded data-portal; (3) survey data collected by the evaluation team from program leaders, teachers, and parents of young children and; (4) qualitative feedback collected directly from practitioners, to better gain local contexts, and understand on-the-ground implementation
Analysis Strategy	Analysis during the pilot year will be descriptive and exploratory. The evaluation team will merge data from multiple sources into a single, program-level dataset.

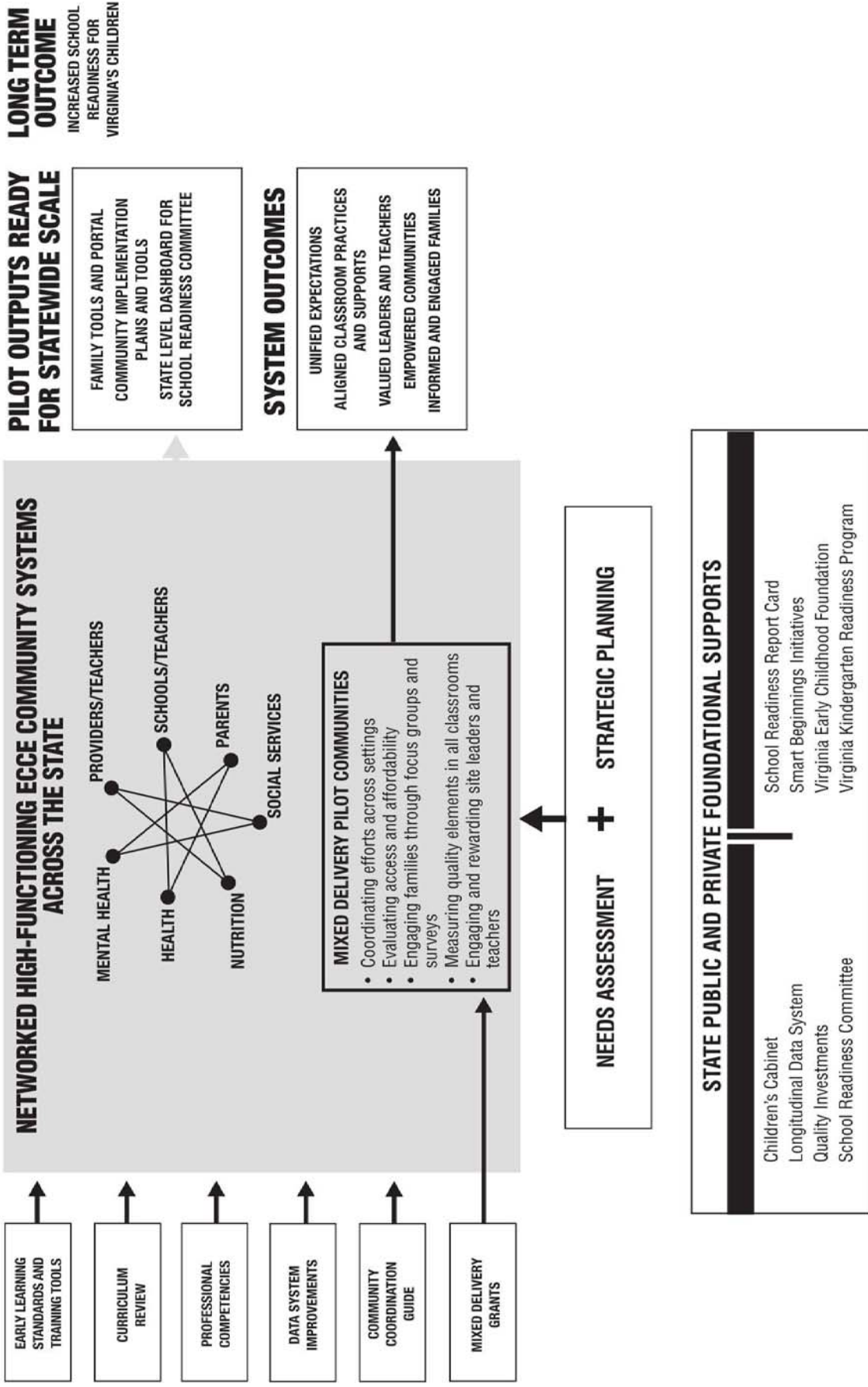
	<p>Once merged, these novel data will provide a foundation for a continuous learning and improvement process, and will also provide a needed baseline for subsequent annual efforts to track growth over time on key metrics. Using quantitative methods, the evaluation team will describe the distribution of each key metric across the 10 communities, and will test for systematic differences across program sector as well as community characteristics (e.g. demographic composition, urbanicity) etc.. In addition, they will assess whether systematic relationships exist between key measures (e.g. the relationship between survey-reported measures of leadership practices and other key quality metrics), as hypothesized in the current Logic Model. Quantitative analyses will be supplemented with qualitative data collection, including focus groups, and open-ended survey items aimed at capturing implementation challenges, data gaps, and potential unintended consequences related to system-building efforts.</p>
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Leverage New Data Sources to Inform Practice, Policy and Systems Working closely with VDOE and VECF in the latter half of PDG, the evaluation team will develop a plan for a longer term-evaluation strategy that will include what analyses should be done, what type of methodologies should be used, and how to manage and fund the work across public, private and academic partners. Key analyses would seek to answer access and quality questions including:

Access	Quality
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tracking changes over time in access to high-quality ECCE opportunities, focused on equitable access across age bands, demographic groups and communities • Assessing changes in parents’ experiences accessing information, searching for and enrolling in ECCE programs • Evaluating impact of state and local initiatives aimed at improving parental engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducting validation studies to ensure quality measures are sufficiently linked to children’s learning gains while in early childhood classrooms • Evaluating the impact of teacher and leader incentives in terms of classroom quality, turnover rate and participation in the child care subsidy program • Assessing the impact of site leader skills, knowledge and practices on quality
<p>Tracking changes over time in VA’s school readiness, as measured by PALS and VKRP <i>(Represents an evaluation of access and quality aspects)</i></p>	

As part of this effort, VA will work closely with the team to identify funding opportunities through public and private grants to build a long-term research-policy partnership that sustains beyond the initial grant period. VA will also explicitly seek out federal technical assistance to advise on the long-term strategy, ensuring that it positions VA to thoughtfully measure outcomes that lead to improved kindergarten readiness, especially among the most vulnerable populations.

Virginia PDG B-5 Logic Model



LOGIC MODEL DESCRIPTION VA’s Logic Model, presented on page 53, outlines the linkages between the PDG activities, the target population/communities, and the expected short- and long-term outcomes resulting from the activities. VA’s vision and goals for its ECCE system put communities at the center, and as such, the Logic Model connects key statewide activities targeting all communities to specific outputs, and highlights the activities targeted for Pilot Communities that will improve system, provider, and child and family outcomes in those communities. Important outputs include new tools, supports and infrastructure that will be scaled statewide by 2022 with improved school readiness as the overall desired outcome.

Foundational Components. VA has two foundational elements described below:

State Infrastructure. The grant activities build upon a strong foundation of state public and private supports, including the state-level coordinating and advisory bodies like the School Readiness Committee (SAC), the state’s longitudinal data system, current state and community-level early childhood initiatives (Smart Beginnings), and the state’s school readiness reporting system (School Readiness Report Card). For example, the Children’s Cabinet will help coordinate the agencies to support the Pilot sites; VECF’s experience with administering the community grants, relationships, and TA expertise will be leveraged for field support; and the current data system will be expanded to capture comprehensive access and quality data.

Needs Assessment and Strategic Plan. Building from this foundation, the grant activities will be informed and supported by the PDG Needs Assessment and Strategic Planning processes, which will unify stakeholders around key ECCE concepts including “school readiness” and “quality” and provide additional insights into the appropriate strategies for empowering local communities, supporting teachers, rewarding performance, and informing and engaging families. These

insights, along with the program evaluation, will be used to refine and improve the grant activities that are currently proposed in a cycle of continuous quality improvement.

Target Communities and Inputs. At the center of the Logic Model (shaded area) are VA’s community-level ECCE systems. For all communities, a set of state-level grant activities will support stronger connections between key components of the local ECCE system. These inputs (found at the far left of the Logic Model) are explained in detail throughout the application and include revising the state’s B-5 early learning standards and aligning them to state standards through age five, conducting a curriculum review based on those standards, training on the new standards and selected state-approved evidenced-based curricula, establishing more rigorous professional competencies for VA’s ECCE professionals that are aligned to the new early learnings standards, a community coordination Guide, and improving the state’s data system. The activities are primarily designed, in the short term, to unify expectations across the B-5 mixed delivery system and align classroom-level supports while setting the foundation for more effective and efficient use for comprehensive system supports for all communities in later years.

The bulk of the PDG B-5 grant funding will be dedicated to supporting 10 Pilot Communities as with targeted and intensive supports to improve system, family and child outcomes within the Pilot Communities. With laser focus on a smaller percentage of communities, VA can nimbly support localities to incrementally improve said outcomes by establishing comprehensive B-5 mixed delivery systems that maximize family choice, increase access to and improve quality of ECCE. These Pilots will serve as proof-of-concept models, representative of diverse communities (rural, urban, etc.) and ready for statewide scale. They will be supported to deeply understand the community-level system, the supply of and demand for care, classroom quality across multiple dimensions (interactions, curriculum implementation, etc.), and the needs and

perspectives of families. Pilot Communities will use PDG funding to complete focused, uniform activities: better understand barriers to effective local service delivery and how to promote access to high-quality ECCE settings; measure the quality of every ECCE classroom/provider in the community; implement family, teacher and leader surveys and convene focus groups to understand the family perspective on quality and what will support families to maximize their choices, knowledge, and experiences. Most importantly, the largest portion of PDG funding, as a supplement to existing ECCE funding, will enable the Pilot Communities to collectively and affordably implement the best practices that research shows are beneficial to children in classrooms across the B-5 ECCE system. In return for their improvement efforts and to lay important groundwork for essential improvement in compensation for this workforce, teachers and leaders will receive financial incentives.

Pilot Outputs Ready for Statewide Scale. The immediate outputs of the Pilots will support statewide scaling, starting in 2020, as described in the Sustainability Plan. These include:

Family Tools and Parent Portal: Pilot findings will inform new tools to better engage families, including a toolkit for kindergarten readiness, how it is measured, and how to best support their children's transition to school as well as a range of tools designed locally in response to family input from focus groups and survey. An important output from the Pilots will be an ECCE Program Profile, with an accompanying robust data system, that provides accessible, family-friendly information about the full array of ECCE options in the community with quality and availability information down to the classroom level to inform and guide family choice.

Community Implementation Plans and Tools: As VA begins to scale in 2020, other communities will not have to reinvent the wheel as they can learn from the Pilots, primarily through a Guide of best practices and lessons learned from the diverse set of experiences. Documenting these

implementation practices as described throughout the application will help VA more rapidly scale the Pilots statewide while also encouraging continuous learning.

State-Level Dashboard Without a clear, focused and transparent mechanism for tracking progress, the efforts of the Needs Assessment, Strategic Plan and Pilots will not likely yield the positive outcomes VA seeks. As demonstrated in the Logic Model, VA will need to measure inputs and track process indicators at first to build a statewide system that drives better systemic outcomes for children. If leaders buy into indicators, establish a public and transparent dashboard for tracking progress and iterate in response to data, then VA can successfully implement the Plan activities, a necessary precursor to improving any system-level outcomes.

System Level Outcomes. As the model shows, VA's Pilot Communities are expected to produce a number of system-level outcomes. The overarching logic here is that if VA can make incremental improvement towards system-level outcomes in a set of diverse communities within a relatively short time period, then this community-level approach, scaled statewide, will methodically and effectively drive improvement in statewide system-level outcomes.

Unified Expectations. The state's work around a revision of the B-5 early learning standards and professional competencies and their alignment with standards through kindergarten will support a set of common expectations for all children and professionals and facilitate transition between the ECCE and K-12 systems. This will hold most immediately true in the Pilot Communities where all family day home, child care, Head Start and pre-k site leaders will have not only collaborated but also performed the same activities, implemented the same best practices, used the same data system and evaluated the same quality elements across all their classrooms in the same way. If VA can unify partners at the local level through a set of focused, uniform activities, then VA will be well positioned to unify the statewide ECCE system using a similar approach.

Aligned Classroom Practices and Supports. Similarly, leaders, along with their B-5 teachers will be trained on and using the same standards, similar curriculum, and expectations for teacher-child interactions and instruction. All teachers will be observed, receive feedback and coaching and will have access to curricular and classroom materials that enable them to improve their practices. Moreover, all teachers within a community will receive these supports at the same time, thus enabling collaboration and group learning. These resources alone will not automatically result in classroom improvement but, at a minimum, teachers need these foundational tools and supports.

Valued Leaders and Teachers. VA believes that piloting these new financial incentives will drive immediate impact in the pilot communities, specifically increasing the ease and completeness of implementation of the activities listed above, decreasing turnover and potentially even driving incremental improvements in classroom quality within one year. Moreover, if this Pilot proves successful, the financial incentives will likely be the most important component needed to incent participation statewide, especially in consideration of low participation rates in VA Quality.

Empowered Communities. Recent history demonstrates that VA's communities will lead the way forward in strengthening ECCE in the Commonwealth. If VA wants to improve school readiness statewide, then VA must empower its communities to lead the charge – by providing children access to high quality ECCE opportunities, families who are meaningfully informed and engaged, providers who are rewarded for improving classroom best practices and leaders that are positioned to drive continuous improvement with actionable information.

Informed and Engaged Families. By focusing at the community-level, VA makes it clear that families are at the center of this ECCE systems-building work. Those closest to children and families are best positioned to develop meaningful relationships, build trust and build systems

that respond to families' diverse needs. By supporting a set of core activities and allowing enough individualization to meet unique community needs, VA can help strengthen family engagement to expand parental choice and knowledge about ECCE programs for children B-5, kindergarten readiness, and supporting successful transitions to school within a diverse subset of communities. With these models and leadership capacity and infrastructure built through PDG, VA will then be poised to scale a system that provides every parent with choice, knowledge and supports that meet their child's needs and helps them prepare for success in school and in life.

PROJECT SUSTAINABILITY PLAN Harnessing existing momentum, PDG will enable VA to strengthen state leadership capacity to maximize existing public and private funds, implement more efficient and responsive services, and position the ECCE system in VA for increased funding. Through the Pilot Communities, a strategic choice based on VA's every-four-year gubernatorial turnover, VA will pilot the future state in local communities to deeply understand family needs, comprehensive access and quality landscape, and most effective quality improvement supports, including resources and incentives at the classroom level. Collectively, this rich work will identify needs, pilot and refine improved systems, and inform how state leaders can accelerate VA's development of an equitable mixed delivery system that delivers stable, affordable, and quality ECCE throughout VA, particularly to vulnerable populations.

Recognizing the grant period is 12 months and the intensive Pilot work impacts 1,000 classrooms, VA has a plan to sustain and scale these efforts. First, VA will build the capacity of existing leaders, staff, and advisory structures, including the SAC, to execute the Strategic Plan, expand the Pilots statewide by 2022 and improve access to and the quality of B-5 ECCE year over year. Second, PDG funding will supplement state and federal funds that are already going to

communities and classrooms, accelerating their progress to demonstrate proof of concept quickly but sustainably. Third, PDG will help compel actions and capture data to maximize existing funding or even increase funding for ECCE. Each of these are outlined below.

Build Leadership Capacity that Sustains. VA will use PDG funding to build ECCE leadership capacity in the public and private sector. This will include establishing a strong early childhood office at the VDOE under the Chief School Readiness Officer that works across agencies and with the field to execute strategic goals, support continuous learning and use data to inform decision and policy-making. Through the Needs Assessment and Strategic Planning, VA will identify ways in which funding, programmatic requirements, and access to services can be streamlined and coordination will be improved. The Chief School Readiness Officer was hired by the Governor to create these efficiencies, and the PDG will accelerate these efforts and ensure they are informed by rich data from families and providers from diverse communities. Similarly, PDG will strengthen the planning, facilitation, technical assistance, and field support functions of VECF, thus maximizing the impact of other VECF activities that strengthen collaboration and programming across VA. Finally, with deep engagement of the SAC and the Dashboard, VA will build the capacity of its primary advisory body, an entity created in statute made up of public and private leaders who make decisions that determine the future of ECCE in VA. Together, SAC members will actively seek ways in which existing funding can be reallocated to create more effective, responsive systems and sustain and expand the Pilots and other PDG work. VA's planning process will invest these leaders in the vision, and the Dashboard will provide public transparency around measuring progress, resulting in public pressure to continue the efforts.

Supplement, Demonstrate Proof of Concept and Maximize. PDG Pilot funding will not only make an immediate impact but demonstrate proof of concept for scaling statewide. PDG funding

will only supplement (not supplant) existing resources, especially for training and classroom supports. Unlike other quality efforts, the Pilots will include every classroom, thus embedding capacity firmly within the community, especially with site leaders, that lasts beyond the grant; specifically site leaders will develop knowledge and skills to improve family engagement, teacher-child interactions and instruction, and transitions to school. Moreover, as VA scales, it will rely on multiple existing funding sources already used for similar purposes including curriculum and CLASS training for pre-k, Head Start and VA Quality sites. For new innovations like the leader and teacher incentive, if PDG successfully enables VA to improve implementation effectiveness while driving down turnover rate and improving classroom quality, then these incentives can be sustained through reallocating existing federal CCDF quality and other funds.

Finally, PDG in VA will result in a stronger overall ECCE infrastructure. The statewide tools developed through PDG can be used at scale without additional cost including the standards, online standards training, competencies, curriculum resources, kindergarten readiness toolkits, community guide and other resources. As it relates to data and measurement, the PDG will fund the start-up costs of the comprehensive classroom-level data system that will provide essential new data about the access and quality ECCE landscape. Provided this system (which will be built efficiently from the core PALS platform that is already trusted, state-funded, and used in all state pre-k and k classrooms) provides compelling data, VA will use it with all ECCE sites when scaling; ongoing maintenance will be lower and covered through existing state and federal funds. In addition, PDG will advance the integrated data system planning so VA has access to better ECCE and longitudinal data going forward.

Compel Actions and Capture Data to Leverage Additional Funding. Currently VA is not maximizing all existing federal, state, local funds, or private funds. Through PDG, VA will set

goals and drive actions to ensure all available resources that can support ECCE are maximized including public resources (e.g., TANF, CACFP) and private resources (e.g., philanthropy). Through the intensive, local-level efforts, PDG will support comprehensive fiscal mapping and analysis with technical assistance to help communities better maximize existing resources or even secure additional funding. In doing so, VA will not only help the Pilot Communities sustain their efforts locally but also establish best practices that can be scaled statewide.

PROJECT BUDGET AND BUDGET JUSTIFICATION

FEDERAL EXPENDITURES DETAIL:

Personnel =	\$398,500
Fringe Benefits =	\$139,475
Travel (out-of-state) =	\$6,768
Equipment =	\$0
Supplies =	\$12,500
Contractual =	\$220,500
Construction =	\$0
Other =	\$13,157,541
Indirect Charges =	\$49,106
Total Federal =	\$13,984,390
30% Match from Non-Federal Resources =	\$4,195,317

PERSONNEL: Total \$398,500 (Salary)

- Hiring pending, 100% FTE, Project/Field Manager
- Hiring pending, 100% FTE, Grants Manager
- Hiring pending, 100% FTE, Kindergarten Readiness Coordinator
- Hiring pending, 100% FTE, Data and Assessment Coordinator
- Hiring pending, 80% FTE, Deputy Director of Classroom Quality
- Jenna Conway, 10% FTE, Chief School Readiness Officer-Project Director
- Hiring pending, 10% FTE, Director of Early Childhood

The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) will use PDG funding to manage the grant effectively and build important organizational capacity to perform ECCE data analysis and drive systemic continual improvement, manage the alignment and production of policies, practices and tools to improve classroom quality and support the field to improve kindergarten readiness. Based on experiences with prior PDG grant, VDOE is poised to hire quickly with the Director in place by December 2018 and all other positions immediately following award announcement. All personnel will be in the Office of Early Childhood under the Chief School Readiness Officer.

BENEFITS: Total \$139,475

Benefits for PDG B-5 grant staff employed by the VDOE are calculated at an average rate of 0.35% of total salary costs. Standard state employee benefits included in this rate are: Virginia Retirement System employer contributions; Social Security/Medicare contributions; group life contributions; employer health insurance premium; retiree health insurance credit premium; short- and long-term disability insurance; and deferred compensation contribution.

TRAVEL (out-of-state): Total \$6,768

Includes the projected cost for key grant staff and UVA and VECF partners to travel to the required three-day PDG B-5 grant conference in Washington, DC. The cost projection is based on six attendees, total transportation costs at \$300 per person, and three days lodging (\$200 per night) and per diem (\$76) based on Washington, DC rates. In-state travel is included in the Other line-item per instructions in the grant FOA and is based on an annualized amount of \$5,000 per FTE for in-state travel to UVA, the Pilot Communities, and other sites for grant related work.

EQUIPMENT: Total \$0

SUPPLIES: Total \$12,500

For VDOE PDG B-5 grant staff, funded at an annualized amount of \$2,500 per FTE. This covers non-equipment office furnishings, paper/printer supplies, office supplies, and postage.

CONTRACTUAL: Total \$220,500

VDOE intends to competitively procure two different types of services to support PDG:

- To produce aligned VA birth to five early learning and development standards for all settings in the mixed delivery system, conduct review sessions with state stakeholders and develop an online training module and train-the-trainer toolkit under Activity 4 (\$130,500)
- To produce a brand and marketing plan with clear dissemination strategies and goals, including target user audiences, to ensure statewide dissemination, awareness and adoption of vision and shared goals for ECCE in Virginia under Activity 5 (\$90,000)

CONSTRUCTION: Total \$0

OTHER: Total \$13,157,541

Includes personnel, support costs, and project funding for VECF and UVA awarded by VDOE as subgrants; funding for annual computer charges and in-state travel at \$7,500 per FTE for VDOE FTEs; and VDOE Honorarium payments. Also includes the estimated Indirect Charges that VECF and UVA will charge as part of their total subgrant awards. Major projects funded are:

- To VECF to oversee needs assessment and strategic planning, including stakeholder engagement, geomapping, fiscal impact and data system capacity analysis (\$598,000)
- To VECF to fund and provide technical assistance to 10 Pilot Communities to gather essential access and quality data, deeply engage families including focus groups, improve local enrollment systems and pilot family-friendly program profiles (\$632,500)
- To UVA to develop online ECCE access and quality data system, leveraging existing statewide data system; to gather and analyze new baseline data via family surveys; to help

develop research-based, data-informed family engagement resources; and to build a suite of kindergarten readiness tools for families, available in multiple languages (\$1,183,782)

- To VECF to provide supplemental funding to 10 Pilot Communities with 350 sites, 1,000 classrooms and 2,350 site leaders and teachers to convene partners; provide training and coaching on best practices including standards, curriculum, developmental screening and teacher-child interactions (with training costs to be covered by stipends); to provide high quality classroom resources (e.g., curriculum) and materials; to support leaders to perform CLASS observations of all classrooms; and to provide \$2500 incentives to site leaders and teachers who participate in quality improvement efforts for full grant period (\$9,178,750)
- To UVA to conduct and analyze results of baseline survey of early childhood teachers and leaders and to produce a suite of infant, toddler and pre-k teacher resources to increase understanding of kindergarten readiness (\$174,468)
- To UVA to provide ongoing evaluation support, sustainable, statewide performance evaluation capacity for early childhood (\$229,324)
- To VECF to contract with consultant to develop feasibility plan for increasing early childhood data system capacity in VA (\$50,000)

INDIRECT: \$49,106

This is indirect charges for VDOE. Indirect is based on VDOE’s currently approved restricted indirect cost rate of 7.50 percent and a direct cost base of VDOE salary, fringe benefits, supplies, computer charges, travel, honorariums, and first \$25,000 (allowable limit) of contracts.

COST SHARING OR MATCHING: Total \$4,195,317

The table below lists the sources of VDOE’s required 30% match from non-federal sources for the PDG B-5 grant. These funds are not claimed as non-federal matching funds for any other federal grant award. The required 30% match will be met by the end of the 12-month grant period.

	Appropriated State Funds
1. Virginia Early Childhood Foundation (VECF) (Item 135 T. 2018 Appropriation Act) =	\$2,750,000
2. Virginia Kindergarten Readiness Program (VKRP) (Item 128 H. 2018 Appropriation Act) =	\$1,350,000
3. Virginia Kindergarten Readiness Program-UVA CASTL Individualized Prof. Development (Item 136 C.14.i. 2018 Appropriation Act) =	\$95,317
Total =	\$4,195,317

The following is a description of these sources of matching funds:

1. VECF = \$2,750,000 (Item 135 T. 2018 Appropriation Act). This state funding provides for: 1) general operations of the Foundation's grant program to strengthen the capacity of local communities to promote school readiness for young children through innovative regional partnerships; 2) to operate a scholarship program to increase the skills of Virginia's early education workforce; and 3) to pilot an initiative to promote public-private delivery of pre-kindergarten services to high-risk children and communities (Mixed Delivery Grants).

2. VKRP = \$1,350,000 (Item 128 H. 2018 Appropriation Act). This state funding is provided through VDOE to UVA to continue statewide implementation of the VKRP student assessment conducted in the fall, and to develop and implement a post-assessment upon the conclusion of the k year. The VKRP is a comprehensive assessment of all VA public school students entering kindergarten in mathematics, self-regulation, social skills, and literacy.
3. Virginia Kindergarten Readiness Program-UVA CASTL Individualized Professional Development = \$95,317 (Item 136 C. 14. i. 2018 Appropriation Act). This state funding is provided through VDOE to UVA-CASTL to ensure that all Virginia Preschool Initiative program classroom teachers receive appropriate individualized professional development training from professional development specialists to support quality teacher-child interactions and effective research-based curriculum implementation.

THIRD-PARTY AGREEMENTS



November 5, 2018

Richard Gonzales
U.S. Department of Health & Human Services
Administration for Children and Families, Office of Child Care
330 C Street, S.W., Suite 4010A
Washington, DC 20201

Preschool Development Grant (PDG): Birth to Five
Virginia Department of Education
Period requested: January 1, 2019 – December 31, 2019

Dear Mr. Gonzales,

This letter confirms that the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation has reviewed Virginia's proposal for the Birth to Five Mixed Delivery System grant and is committed to partner with the Virginia Department of Education for the grant term of January 1, 2019 – January 31, 2019. The Virginia Early Childhood Foundation is located in the 7th congressional district, and our DUNS number is 9331835140000.

VECF confirms commitment to the scope of work and responsibilities outlined in the PDG budget, justification, and application narrative including: oversight of expert contractors related to needs assessment, fiscal analysis, strategic plan, and data system development; coordination and implementation of Community Pilot activities by personnel to be hired and supervised by VECF's President, including administering supplemental funds and technical assistance related to counts, quality inventories, parent and stakeholder engagement and education activities, implementation and sharing of best practices in classrooms and communities; and for state systems refinement, ensuring capable platform for PDG teacher and leader incentives, producing a Guide to facilitate Pilot replication in other communities, and discerning next steps for VA's realization of an early childhood integrated data system (ECIDS).

By submission of this commitment letter, VECF and I as its chief executive officer certify (1) that the information submitted within the application is true, complete and accurate to the best of knowledge; (2) that any false, fictitious, or fraudulent statements or claims may subject the Foundation to criminal, civil, or administrative penalties; and (3) that the Foundation agrees to accept responsibility for the conduct of the relevant responsibilities of this project and to provide the required progress reports if an award is made as a result of VDOE's application. Please let us know if additional information is needed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kathy Glazer".

Kathy Glazer, President


UNIVERSITY of VIRGINIA
Office of the Assistant Vice President for Research Administration
Office of Sponsored Programs

November 1st, 2018

Virginia Department of Education

Research Proposal: "Preschool Development Grant: Birth to Five"
Virginia Department of Education, Principal Investigator: Jenna Conway
University of Virginia Principal Investigator: Daphna Bassok
Requested Funds: \$1,744,530
Period requested: January 1, 2019 – December 31, 2019

Dear Institutional Official,

This letter confirms that the appropriate program and administrative personnel at the University of Virginia have reviewed the above referenced proposal and are committed to enter into a subcontract with Virginia Department of Education for the performance period of January 1, 2019 – December 31, 2019. The work to be performed by the University of Virginia does include human research subjects, and the University of Virginia does maintain an active and enforced conflict of interest policy meeting the requirements of 42 CFR Part 50, Subpart F and 45 CFR Part 94.

The University of Virginia's budget, budget justification and scope of work are provided as separate enclosures to this letter. The estimated cost of the proposed subcontract will not exceed \$1,744,530 and includes appropriate direct and indirect costs. The University of Virginia is located in congressional district VA-005 and our DUNS number is 065391526.

Furthermore, by submission of this commitment letter the University of Virginia and its Principal Investigator (PI) certify (1) that the information submitted within the application is true, complete and accurate to the best of the University of Virginia's and PI's knowledge; (2) that any false, fictitious, or fraudulent statements or claims may subject the University of Virginia and PI to criminal, civil, or administrative penalties; and (3) that the PI agrees to accept responsibility for the scientific conduct of the project and to provide the required progress reports if an award is made as a result of the Virginia Department Of Education's application.

Please call on Daphna Bassok, UVA Principal Investigator, for scientific information (dbassok@virginia.edu). Administrative questions may be directed to me at the contact information below. We request that correspondence pertaining to this proposal and any ensuing award be sent to the Office of Sponsored Programs and to the principal investigator.

Sincerely,

**Judy D.
Mallory**

Digitally signed by Judy D. Mallory
DN: cn=Judy D. Mallory,
email=jdm6a@virginia.edu, ou=UVA High
Assurance PKI User, o=University of
Virginia, c=US
Date: 2018.11.05 12:20:43 -0500

Judy D. Mallory
Senior Grants & Contracts Administrator
Office of Sponsored Programs
ospnoa@virginia.edu

1001 North Emmet Street, PO Box 400195, Charlottesville, VA 22904
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Preschool Development Grant: Birth to Five Scope of Work Summary for University of Virginia

The University of Virginia will support the Virginia Department of Education on work related to improving access to and quality of early childhood education programs in the Commonwealth. Daphna Bassok, an Associate Professor of Education and Public Policy will serve as Principal Investigator for the project, which will include three primary areas of work.

1. Evaluating Virginia's early childhood system-building efforts (Lead: Dr. Daphna Bassok)

- *Lead an evaluation team to advise the state on their early childhood system-building efforts, with a focus on access/availability, quality, and outcomes, providing feedback on all key grant activities and deliverables*
- *Review existing data availability. Process and clean data submitted by local communities. Summarize the quality of these data and identify gaps. Conduct descriptive analyses to support timely decision making*
- *Develop, field and analyze findings from a survey of Virginia parents whose young children are enrolled in publicly-funded early childhood programs*
- *Develop, field and analyze findings from a survey of early childhood educators and leaders.*
- *Support the state's efforts to develop a longer-term evaluation strategy beyond the grant period.*

2. Developing and piloting an early childhood information portal (Lead: Dr. Anita McGinty)

Leveraging an existing state-wide data system that tracks early literacy assessment, the UVA team will pilot an expanded data portal to collect teacher and program-level information from early childhood programs in 10 pilot communities. The team will:

- *Build the technical infrastructure needed for local data sharing and centralized data management*
- *Establish support and technical assistance to help in ensuring accountability to data sharing procedures/ use of the new data portal*
- *Support efforts to gather feedback from the public to ensure new childcare/pre-k profiles feel relevant, accessible, and have the potential to lead to different or improved decision-making for their young children.*

3. Producing Engagement Materials to support Virginia's Kindergarten Readiness Program (VKRP) Lead: (Dr. Amanda Williford)

- *Create friendly and informational toolkits to help families of preschool children understand VKRP, what it measures, how it relates to the broader conception of school readiness, and what they can do to support their children's development.*
- *Create similar materials for early childhood educators.*