



TEL 402.471.2295  
FAX 402.471.0117



P.O. Box 94987  
Lincoln, NE 68509-4987



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## PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM RATIONALE

**DATE:** April 19, 2023

**TO:** Deborah A. Frison, Ed.D.  
Deputy Commissioner of Education

**FROM:** Melody Hobson

**PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM:** Approve grants to selected Educational Service Units (ESUs) to provide identified trainings free to the early education and care field.

**AGENDA ITEM TYPE:** Grant

### RATIONALE/BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) partners with the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) to support early childhood infrastructure related to child care training and quality improvement efforts. The NDE creates training and prepares trainers for professional development curriculum required by the DHHS child care licensing regulations. The NDE also partners with DHHS to implement the Nebraska Step Up to Quality: Quality Rating and Improvement System. The NDE maintains the quality improvement efforts and DHHS awards the ratings for Step Up to Quality.

The Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) has been awarded federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to support the provision of quality child care. In January, the State Board of Education approved the acceptance of up to \$1.5 million of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds from the Nebraska DHHS. The agreement with DHHS requires the NDE to grant out funds to the 7 different ESUs that operate the Nebraska Early Learning Connection Training Partnerships and to contract with individuals and organizations to provide training.

The training that will be offered free of charge for early education and care providers includes the following training curricula that is required by DHHS child care licensing:

- Safe with You (Health and safety training)
- Management Training Program (Business training for child care centers)
- Getting Down to Business (Business training for family child care homes)
- Early Learning Guidelines domain training (Child development)

The following trainings will also be offered free of charge and are needed for programs participating in Step Up to Quality in order to move up the levels of the program:

- Special Care Training (introduction to caring for children with special needs)
- Introduction to the Infant, Toddler, and PreK CLASS (program quality assessments)
- Introduction to the Family Child Care Environment Rating scale (program quality assessment for family child care)



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- Introduction to the Environment Rating Scales:( Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale 3 and the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale -3, both are program quality assessments for center-based early childhood programs)
- Free training will be offered from June 1, 2023, through May 31, 2024, or until the allotted funding is expended, whichever comes first.

The following ESUs will be awarded grants of more than \$50,000. \*

- ESU #3 - \$657,894
- ESU #6 - \$108,655
- ESU #10 - \$70,133

Grant amounts were determined by estimates of training events needed in each region and funding was allocated proportionately.

**PROPOSED BOARD MEETING (MONTH/YEAR):** Action item- May, 2023

**ESTIMATED COST:** Up to \$836,682

This is the total to the three ESUs that are being awarded grants of more than \$50,000 each

**FOR CONTRACTS AND GRANTS:**

- Indicate the Funding Source: Federal ARPA funding via Nebraska DHHS
- New or Renewal: New
- If renewal, date of first approval: N/A

**FOR NEW CONTRACTS OR OTHER CONTRACTS REQUIRING PROCUREMENT:**

- Indicate the method of procurement: N/A
- Rationale for method of procurement: N/A
- Rationale for contractor selection: N/A

**FOR GRANT SUBAWARDS:**

- Describe the grantee selection process:  
Per NDE Procurement, Appendix C, the following is a situation for which an exemption to the requirements for competitive bidding or negotiation for state agencies is set out in 73-507 R.R.S.
  - Agreement for services to be performed for a state agency by another state or local government agency for the direct provision of services to the public.
- The three ESUs identified are part of the Early Learning Connection professional development and support system for early childhood education and care providers in Nebraska. These ESUs currently have grants for early childhood professional development and for coaching support. These are the



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only 3 of a total of 7 ESUs that house the Early Learning Connection professional development system. The remaining 4 ESUs will receive a grant but the grant amounts are each under \$50,000.

Additional information –

The following ESUs will be awarded grants of less than \$50,000

- ESU #1 – \$37,211
- ESU #7 - \$31,841
- ESU #13- \$26,101
- ESU#16 - \$28,166

The sum of the four grants listed above that are less than \$50,000 each are not included in the estimated cost listed for the action item on the agenda.

*\*Updated 02.07.2023*