



PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM RATIONALE

DATE: April 16, 2024

TO: Dr. Brian L. Maher
Commissioner of Education

FROM: Melody Hobson

PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM: Authorize the Commissioner to approve grants for up to three years to fund the Early Learning Connection Training Coordination system.

AGENDA ITEM TYPE: Grant - consent

RATIONALE/BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

- The professional development system for early childhood education and care providers in Nebraska is based on dissemination of training through seven Early Learning Connection (ELC) Partnerships.
- These ELC Partnerships are located in selected Educational Service Units across Nebraska.
- Early Learning Connection Coordinators lead partnership efforts at local levels to form networks of early childhood education and care providers, private and public agencies, planning region teams, representatives from Nebraska Extension, school districts and institutions of higher education to provide professional development opportunities for adults working with young children across Nebraska.
- The funding for these grants comes from the Federal Child Care and Development Block Grant for which the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) is the lead agency. The Nebraska Department of Education enters into an agreement annually with DHHS for the use of a portion of the federal grant money.
- The NDE monitors the ELC grants in multiple ways.
 - NDE staff visit each ELC Coordinator and the Coordinator's supervisor each year.
 - At least 3 meetings are held with all ELC Coordinators.
 - Additional virtual meetings or conference calls are held as needed.
 - Quarterly reports are submitted by the ELCs.
 - Financial reimbursement requests are scrutinized.
- The grants will be with ESUs 1, 3, 6, 7,10, 13, and 16.

PROPOSED BOARD MEETING (MONTH/YEAR): May 2024

ESTIMATED COST: \$1,592,334

- ESU #1 \$170,364
- ESU #3 \$319,291
- ESU #6 \$304,564
- ESU #7 \$170,364
- ESU#10 \$290,297
- ESU#13 \$168,727
- ESU#16 \$168,727

FOR CONTRACTS AND GRANTS:

- Indicate the Funding Source: Federal Child Care Development Funds
 - This activity is included in the annual agreement between the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services and the NDE for the use of a portion of the CCDF funds reserved for early childhood professional development.
- New or Renewal: Renewal
- If renewal, date of first approval: Approximately 2007

FOR NEW CONTRACTS OR OTHER CONTRACTS REQUIRING PROCUREMENT: NA

- Indicate the method of procurement: NA
- Rationale for method of procurement: NA
- Rationale for contractor selection: NA

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 grants to the seven ESUs are non-competitive, however each year the grantees are required to complete a continuation grant application. In this application, the ESU reports:

- The number, variety, and engagement of local partners and the value of partner contributions (leveraged funds).
- The regional training needs, based on an annual assessment, and the strategies to meet those needs.
- The plan for meeting the requirements of the NDE and the US department of Health and Human services (the originator of the Child Care and Development Fund)
- Grants are reviewed by a panel consisting of representatives from the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, and the NDE. Strengths are noted. Areas for additional information

are recorded, and all feedback is sent to the ESU. These grants will be for the time period of June 1, 2023, through May 31, 2024.

**Updated 08.15.2023*