FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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ECECD Launches Grant to Support Local Early Childhood Coalitions

SANTA FE – Today, the New Mexico Early Childhood Education and Care Department (ECECD) announced broad new investments across the state in support of early childhood coalitions, groups of local stakeholders dedicated to building early education and care in their communities. ECECD's new Local Early Childhood Systems Building Grant, made possible by the Coronavirus Response and relief Supplemental Appropriation (CRSSA) Act, will distribute $5.4 million in funding over the next two years to grow the capacity of early childhood coalitions across the state. The grant will help existing early childhood coalitions, typically comprised of local child care businesses, early childhood service providers, and individual community members, build stronger state and local partnerships, as well as support the development of new or emerging coalitions across the state.

"Every community in New Mexico is unique, and this administration is committed to facilitating decision making and problem solving at the local level," said ECECD Cabinet Secretary Elizabeth Groginsky. "Local early childhood coalitions understand the needs of children, families, child care businesses, and service providers in their own communities better than anyone else. Through this new grant, ECECD is investing in that local knowledge and expertise to strengthen early childhood systems across the state."

In accordance with the objectives and goals laid out in its New Mexico Early Childhood Strategic Plan (2021-2024), ECECD is using the Local Early Childhood Systems Building Grant to create more cohesive, equitable, and effective early childhood systems in New Mexico. This will require coordinating a continuum of exceptional family-driven, community-based programs and services available and accessible to all families across the state.

The grant will award $150k annually to each qualifying coalition in FY22 and FY23 to support the following objectives:

- Establish a coalition coordinator position (min .75 FTE) focused on outreach, communication, coordination, and collaboration on the local level, as well as connecting to state level early childhood work
- Employ strategies to develop, strengthen, and align local early childhood systems
- Uncover and address underlying issues that impede parents' and caregivers' awareness of early childhood services
- Develop culturally inclusive family and coalition leadership
- Advance local planning efforts and shared decision-making

"The pandemic showcased the inequities and essential needs of young children and their families which brought the early childhood sector together to evaluate their current systems in place. This grant will provide an opportunity for coalitions like the Navajo Nation Early Childhood Collaborative to re-evaluate our systems, plan, and take action collaboratively as early childhood stakeholders, community members, and parents/caregivers to make necessary change in our communities," said Kimberly Kee, program coordinator for Navajo Project I-LAUNCH.

ECECD is committed to ensuring a fair and simple distribution process for this grant opportunity. The UNM Family Development Program will assist aspiring coalitions in preparing their applications and support the growth of established and new coalitions over the next two years.

For more information, visit https://www.nmececd.org/local-early-childhood-systems-building-grant/

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The New Mexico Early Childhood Education and Care Department (ECECD) launched in 2020, one of only four cabinet level agencies nationwide that consolidated all early childhood agencies under one roof. ECECD's mission is to optimize the health, development, education, and well being of babies, toddlers, and preschoolers through a family-driven, equitable, community-based system of programs and services. Learn more about how ECECD supports children, families, and the early childhood professionals that serve our communities at nmececd.org. On Facebook and Twitter as @NewMexicoECECD.