



## Partnership Opportunity

### The Opportunity

Through the Early Learning Challenge, states will compete for \$500 million in federal funding to advance high-quality and comprehensive early childhood systems and services. This is a unique opportunity for states to strategically leverage this federal investment into practices and policies that can narrow the achievement gap for all children. The Early Learning Challenge Collaborative, led by the First Five Years Fund and the BUILD Initiative, will partner with and support states as they seize this opportunity.

The Challenge requires states to propose coherent early learning systems based on critical elements including learning standards, kindergarten readiness assessments, tiered quality rating systems, data systems, family supports, and an effective workforce.

The Collaborative will work in partnership with states to support their development of comprehensive systems. Over the next few months, the Collaborative will offer assistance to *all* interested states through policy materials and calls with national experts. The Collaborative will also work more intensively with selected states that share its vision for state early learning systems, show a strong leadership commitment to early learning reform, and can most effectively embrace the technical assistance opportunity.

### Vision and Values

The Collaborative holds distinct values that shape its vision for states' comprehensive early childhood systems, including the **presence of assertive leadership** at a level that ensures forward movement and a **coherent organizational structure**. We seek an **entrepreneurial commitment to high quality and an intentional focus on high-needs children**. We value the thoughtful **commitment to systems that provide high-quality programs and services** for children and families that are coordinated across sectors (early learning, family leadership and support, health and mental health) and span from birth through the early elementary years.

### Technical Assistance

Level One: The Collaborative will provide technical assistance to all responding states through planning templates, policy materials, webinars and conference calls.

Level Two: More intensive technical assistance will be available to selected interested states, including support for the application planning process, articulating rigorous plans for policy elements that meet the application criteria, content expertise, and/or expert feedback on draft applications. This TA will be provided by phone, e-mail, and on-site.

Level Three: In addition to individualized TA, a smaller group of states will be invited to a high-impact in-person meeting providing the opportunity to engage closely with early learning and education experts and receive focused guidance on articulating the state's vision in an effective application. This convening will be held September 8-9 in Chicago, Illinois.

## Forging Partnerships

The Collaborative is interested in deeper working relationships with states whose leaders are committed to this vision and these values through targeted technical assistance to help develop a comprehensive system and the critical elements within it. Working within our available resources, we seek to identify a diverse group of states most interested in engaging in a partnership **connecting high-ranking state leaders (those with the most influence to advance early learning reform) with national experts**. If you are interested in partnering with the Collaborative, please complete the [brief survey](#) and submit by August 4. If you have any questions, or if you have any concern about meeting this deadline, please contact Susan Hibbard at [shibbard@buildinitiative.org](mailto:shibbard@buildinitiative.org) or 207.822.4333. We know that timelines are tight, and we will make every attempt to respond to states by August 9.

The survey questions are included on the following page to help you determine who should complete the survey from your state if you decide the Collaborative is a logical partner to support your Early Learning Challenge effort.

## Survey Questions

### Contact Information

1. Who is the primary contact for us in your state? Please provide name, title, organizational affiliation, email address, and phone number.

### Vision and Approach

2. Do you agree with the vision and values described by the Collaborative?
3. If you answered “yes” or “largely,” how is the state working toward that vision? What is your state’s greatest strength within this values framework?

### Leadership and Leadership Team

4. Who will be the state's leadership team for this initiative, and who is the team leader? Please provide us with the name, title, organizational affiliation, email address and phone number for each team member and the team leader.
5. What is the relationship of the team's members and leader to the governor's office?

### Technical Assistance

6. All responding states will receive resource materials and invitations to expert webinars and calls. However, if you are interested in more intensive technical assistance, please briefly describe your state's top three needs for moving your application forward. These priorities should reflect your progress in meeting the outcomes in the draft selection criteria. This information will also help us understand the kind of assistance and specific content areas you would find most valuable.
7. Finally, if representatives from your state are interested in being considered for the high-impact in-person meeting on September 8-9 in Chicago, please indicate your interest by identifying which members of the leadership team (up to four) would be available to attend.