



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Denver's Early Childhood Council and Partners Receive \$250,000 Early Childhood Workforce Innovation Grant

New pilot program addresses systemic improvement of recruitment, retention and compensation for teachers of youngest Coloradans

DENVER, Colo. (May 1, 2018) – Denver's Early Childhood Workforce Initiative, led by Denver's Early Childhood Council, has been selected to receive an Early Childhood Workforce Innovation Grant as part of the Transforming the Early Childhood Workforce in Colorado Initiative. Working closely with the Denver Office of Economic Development Center, Mi Casa Resource Center, Focus Points Family Resource Center, Community College of Denver and Metropolitan State University of Denver, the Council will head up use of the \$250,000 grant to fund an ambitious pilot program to recruit new early childhood teaching professionals, establish supportive services to retain those professionals, and provide a clear pathway to self-sufficiency in a long-term early childhood career.

"Early educators are vital to children's healthy progress, but many communities in Denver do not have access to a high quality and dependable workforce who families can trust with their children to grow and flourish," said Emily Bustos, Denver's Early Childhood Council executive director. *"This new project seeks to increase and assist the early childhood teaching professionals in licensed, high quality programs serving children from birth to five years old within child care deserts in Denver."*

Denver's Early Childhood Council and its partners were one of six collaborations selected to receive grants ranging from \$25,000 to \$250,000 as part of the Transforming the Early Childhood Workforce in Colorado Initiative, a public-private partnership led by Early Milestones Colorado that includes Gary Community Investments, Buell Foundation, the Colorado Department of Education, and the Colorado Department of Human Services. Rose Community Foundation is the fiscal sponsor of the grant-making effort. Mile High United Way will furnish a match to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funding provided by the Office of Economic Development to support on-the-job employment wage stipends for program participants. Technical assistance and evaluation of the initiative is provided by Mathematica Policy Research.

The current grants, covering work from May 1, 2018 to April 30, 2019, are the first in what is anticipated to be a multi-year initiative. There may be an opportunity for renewed funding, if necessary and appropriate, based on progress, engagement, and the availability of funding.



The highly-competitive selection process included 43 proposals impacting 47 of Colorado's 64 counties. Projects were selected based on their strong partnerships, flexible approaches to improvement, and willingness to tackle Colorado's workforce challenges by testing innovative ideas that hold the promise for long-term, systemic and sustainable change. Lead agencies for the partnerships presenting proposals included local governments, early childhood councils and programs, school districts, higher education institutions and nonprofits.

In addition to Denver's Early Childhood Workforce Initiative, projects that received innovation grants, and their lead agency, include: Child Care 8000, Mesa County Public Health; Compensation Parity in Summit County, Early Childhood Options; Expanding Professional Possibilities in Early Childhood, Early Childhood Council of Larimer County; La Plata County & Southern Ute Early Childhood Workforce Initiative, Early Childhood Council of La Plata County; and Pathways to Teaching, St. Vrain Valley School District.

Denver's Early Childhood Council (www.denverearlychildhood.org) is a nonprofit, 501(c)3, organization serving as Denver's early childhood hub leveraging resources, opportunities and connections to create a quality system that impacts the lives of children and their families.