



Call for Letters of Interest for Universal Preschool Program Discovery

Between 2021 and 2022, the Colorado Department of Early Childhood (CDEC) received over \$700 million in state and federal stimulus funding to strengthen and expand the early childhood sector in Colorado and support families and the workforce to ensure all children have access to high-quality child care. CDEC has partnered with the Colorado Evaluation and Action Lab (Colorado Lab) at the University of Denver to serve as the early childhood evaluation hub for this stimulus funding and to support CDEC with evaluation strategic planning department wide. As part of this effort, the Colorado Lab is accepting Letters of Interest from research teams interested in receiving funding to conduct program discovery activities and capture a theory of change and implementation model for Colorado's new Universal Preschool Program (UPK).

To inform ongoing UPK evaluation planning efforts, the selected research team will:

- Review [UPK planning and implementation documentation](#)
- Conduct key informant interviews and/or focus groups with CDEC program teams and stakeholder groups (such as the Early Childhood Leadership Commission members, UPK stakeholder facilitation groups, and others)
- Capture a UPK theory of change based on qualitative work that documents program goals and intended strategies to achieve these goals (this will serve as the grounding framework for development of evaluation questions and indicators)
- Synthesize learnings from qualitative inputs and UPK program documentation to draft a high-level implementation model that conforms to CDEC's vision of program rollout, including family application and program matching processes, flow of funds, and decision-making processes among the multiple organizations operating UPK

This project will be supported by stimulus funds. Work will begin in May 2023 and must be completed by October 2023 with a budget of up to \$150,000.

If interested, please complete the [Call for External Research Partners](#) questionnaire and submit a letter of interest. Letters of interest should be no longer than two pages and submitted to Val@coloradolab.org no later than end of day **Tuesday, April 25, 2023**. Letters should include:

1. **Approach:** Describe your team's high-level approach to conducting program discovery activities and developing theories of change, highlighting your previous experiences implementing such approaches. UPK overview documents can be found [here](#).
2. **Team:** Provide a brief description of relevant qualifications and experiences of the project team leads, and how the team is well-positioned to execute the proposed project. Also identify any anticipated support that will be needed from the Colorado Lab to complete this work.
3. **Timeline & Cost:** Briefly comment on the feasibility of completing this work within the anticipated timeline and budget. A detailed scope of work with specific deliverables and budget will be requested should your team be selected for this opportunity.