Colorado Evaluation & Action Lab
UNIVERSITY OF DENVER

Call for Letters of Interest for Early Care and Education Workforce Compensation Policy Analysis

In 2023, the Colorado Department of Early Childhood (CDEC) received a $3.85 million grant from the Early Educator Investment Collaborative (EEIC) to catalyze change in ECE workforce compensation in line with Colorado's Comprehensive Early Childhood Workforce Plan and Compensation and Benefits Task Force Report. Grant funds support research, planning, and strategy towards long-term, sustained increases to the compensation (salaries and benefits) of the early care and education (ECE) workforce.

In October 2024, CDEC contracted with the Colorado Evaluation and Action Lab (Colorado Lab) to serve as the ECE Workforce Evidence-Building Hub. The Hub is responsible for fulfilling an ECE workforce evidence-building agenda over the life of the grant, including identifying and supporting selected vendors to produce relevant and actionable policy analysis and evidence for CDEC to inform their planning and strategy toward increasing compensation.

As part of this work, the Colorado Lab is seeking an external vendor to conduct an analysis of policy opportunities within Colorado to increase compensation, a landscape analysis of durable strategies used in other states to increase compensation, and recommendations for policy options amenable to Colorado to improve ECE compensation. With support from the Hub, the selected vendor will conduct:

1. **ECE Workforce Compensation Policy Analysis.** Conduct an analysis of potential policy levers available in Colorado to improve ECE workforce compensation, including the extent to which each policy lever will move the needle toward desired salary scales and benefits packages, and for which sector of the ECE workforce. This should include identifying new funding, identifying untapped opportunities within existing ECE funding streams, and the feasibility of advancing different policy options in Colorado.

2. **ECE Workforce Compensation Landscape Analysis.** Drawing from the BUILD Initiative's Workforce Compensation Report, conduct a more nuanced analysis of the implementation of existing policy strategies that durably and substantially increased compensation used in other states that might hold promise for improving compensation in Colorado given Colorado's unique policy and systems context, based on the results of the Colorado Policy Analysis (#1). This analysis should include the policy mechanism, the funding stream, amount of funding, extent to which each funding stream improved wages and for whom, and an analysis of the implementation (e.g., waivers needed, legislation advanced or changed, how and to whom money flows, etc). Information provided from this work should include policy advances, processes for building will and communication strategies that aided in policy advancement (when applicable), data on impact, and lessons learned.

3. **ECE Workforce Compensation Recommendations:** Develop a set of potential options to advance different policy strategies that discusses feasibility and potential impact.

The selected vendor will ideally hold the following perspectives:

- A researcher with academic training and experience conducting rigorous state- and national-level policy analyses.

- Expertise in the ECE sector, with a national or multi-state lens.

- Insight on the Colorado political and policy context, and the Colorado ECE system and policy context.

- Willingness and excitement to collaborate with the Colorado Lab and CDEC, to integrate feedback from these groups into recommendations and reports, and to work with the Colorado Lab to translate the policy analysis into actionable recommendations for advancing policy change.

This project will be supported by EEIC grant funds, distributed by the Colorado Lab. Work will begin in December 2024 and must be completed by June 30, 2025, with a budget of $50,000. There is a potential opportunity to extend this project, with a new scope of work and budget, after June 2025.

Letters of interest should be no longer than two pages and submitted to Ellen@coloradolab.org no later than end of day **Tuesday, November 19 2024**. Letters should include:

1. **Approach:** Describe your high-level approach to conducting a policy analysis and a landscape analysis producing the outputs stated above.

2. **Experience**. Describe experience conducting a policy analysis in the ECE sector. In an attachment, provide one example of a policy analysis report that includes policy recommendations. This can include an analysis of policies outside the early childhood field, but should demonstrate an application of the skills required for the work described above. The primary authors of the report should include at least one person from the applicant team.

3. **Team:** Provide a brief description of relevant qualifications of the project lead, and any other key project team members (if applicable) and how the project lead/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. Attach the project lead's Curriculum Vitae.

4. **Timeline & Cost:** Briefly address 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 you be selected for this opportunity.

The Colorado Lab will host a 45-minute Q&A session on **Thursday, November 7 at 12:00 PM MST**. Please email Ellen Witt at ellen@coloradolab.org to request an invitation.