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## Project Summary

Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness (OPSR)  
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Oklahoma proposes a PDG B-5 project that builds on years of system-building efforts to create a more coordinated and accessible early childhood system for families across the state. While Oklahoma has made significant progress through its School Readiness Pathway, the 2024 Needs Assessment Update and 2025 Strategic Plan Update clearly show that the B-5 system remains fragmented, difficult for families to navigate, and burdened by persistent workforce shortages, financial and operational instability, inconsistent safety practices, limited early literacy supports, and siloed data systems. Families encounter confusion during eligibility, enrollment, and transitions, while providers struggle to braid funding, retain staff, and access aligned business and instructional supports. These challenges fall most heavily on infants and toddlers, rural communities, and families involved in multiple programs across different ECE funding streams.

The Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness (OPSR), the state's federally designated Early Childhood State Advisory Council, proposes a coordinated set of strategies to strengthen alignment, enhance existing programs, improve family navigation support, and modernize statewide infrastructure. The project will serve children birth through age five, their families, and early childhood providers across the ECE ecosystem and advance three integrated areas of work.

First, OPSR will reduce fragmentation by strengthening collaboration with the Head Start Collaboration Office, establishing a Unified Birth-Five Transitions Framework with pilot projects with Head Start Grantees, developing a coordinated statewide financing strategy, and launching a Head Start-led Active Supervision and Safety Alignment Initiative to ensure consistent, high-quality safety practices.

Second, OPSR will improve workforce stability through statewide business and financial supports, integrated workforce strategies, custom retention incentives, and strengthen community capacity to deepen early literacy and family engagement.

Third, OPSR will modernize statewide data and navigation by unifying B-5 indicators, updating the Early Childhood Integrated Data System (ECIDS) plan, publishing accessible data tools, and supporting the OKDHS Early Childhood Portal and unified eligibility feasibility study.

Together, these strategies create a more effective, efficient, and family-first early childhood system that improves outcomes for young children across Oklahoma.

## Project Narrative

### Critical element 1: Statewide ECE needs assessment and strategic plan

Oklahoma's most recent Birth–Five Needs Assessment Update was completed in 2024 through the current PDG B–5 award. As the State Advisory Council, the Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness (OPSR) coordinated a collaborative, multi-agency process to update the assessment. The 2024 Needs Assessment incorporated data and analysis contributed by:

- Oklahoma Human Services (OKDHS)
- Oklahoma State Department of Health (OSDH)
- Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE)
- Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (ODMHSAS)
- Oklahoma Health Care Authority (OHCA)
- Oklahoma Child Care Resource & Referral (CCRR) Network
- The Oklahoma Head Start Collaboration Office and Head Start/Early Head Start grantees statewide

This cross-agency input ensured that the Needs Assessment reflects current statewide conditions across Oklahoma's early childhood mixed-delivery system, including licensed child care, Head Start and Early Head Start, public pre-K, family support programs, and health and behavioral health services. Family and community input were incorporated through the *2024 Oklahoma Child Abuse Prevention Plan*, authored by OPSR for OSDH. This included 1,014 statewide survey responses and community cafés conducted across all 77 counties. The 2024 update builds on the original 2019 baseline PDG Needs Assessment and reflects post-pandemic shifts in access, family well-being, child care supply, workforce stability, and community conditions.

### **Summary of Key Findings from the Needs Assessment**

#### Demographic Characteristics and Geographic Distribution

Oklahoma is home to 247,466 children birth through five. Population distribution is almost evenly split: 52% in urban metro areas and 48% in rural regions. Urban communities - including Oklahoma City and Tulsa - contain the highest concentrations of young children, creating significant demand for early care, education, and health services. Rural regions experience higher child dependency ratios, fewer service providers, and more limited access to child care, health care, and transportation. State-reported demographic categories show variation across the state, which influences family needs and service delivery planning. Poverty among families with young children is highest in the Southeast (26%), Northeast (24%), and Southwest (22%) regions compared with the statewide rate of 18%.

#### Availability, Quality, and Accessibility of Early Care and Education Child Care Access and Supply

The Needs Assessment shows ongoing challenges in early care and education (ECE) access statewide:

- 55% of Oklahomans live in a child care desert
- 68% of rural residents experience limited or no licensed care
- Families report difficulty securing infant–toddler care and nontraditional-hour care

The state has 3,108 licensed facilities with capacity for 124,186 children, though availability varies widely across communities. Over 65% of surveyed families require full-time care; 29% require 24-hour care; and 56% require before/after school care.

#### Head Start and Early Head Start in the Mixed-Delivery System

Head Start and Early Head Start (HS/EHS) are central to Oklahoma’s early learning landscape.

The state includes:

- 20 Head Start/Early Head Start grantees

- 13 Tribal Head Start programs
- 1,092 classrooms statewide, serving nearly 15,000 children

Head Start programs provide comprehensive services such as health coordination, developmental screenings, family services, and supports for children experiencing homelessness, children in foster care, and children with disabilities. This makes HS/EHS a foundational component of the state's mixed-delivery system. Child care affordability is a major challenge. Weekly care costs increased more than 30% statewide in FY23, with significant strain on single-parent households and families in rural communities.

#### Quality and Workforce Stability

Oklahoma maintains strong participation in its Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS), with 63% of programs rated 3-star or higher. Still, workforce shortages hinder access and quality:

- Average hourly wage: \$11.61
- Workforce turnover is high
- Rural providers face the greatest staffing shortages

#### True Cost of Care

The *2024 RAND Updated True Cost of Care Study* confirmed that subsidy reimbursement rates do not cover the actual cost of providing quality care, especially for infants and toddlers.

Providers also continue feeling the impact of expiring stabilization grants and inflation.

### **Health, Maternal Health, and Behavioral Health Needs**

The Needs Assessment identifies several health-related concerns for young children and families:

- Oklahoma ranks 45th in women’s health and 44th in children’s health nationally
- 87.5% kindergarten immunization coverage
- Only 35.2% of children ages 9-35 months receive developmental screenings

State health data show differences in maternal and infant outcomes across demographic categories. The assessment update also notes limited access to maternal health care in rural areas, shortages in obstetrics and gynecology providers, and child/infant mortality rates above national averages.

#### Behavioral Health and Substance Use

- Oklahoma ranks 5th in rates of “Any Mental Illness”
- 16.1% of adults have a substance use disorder
- Fentanyl-related deaths increased 12-fold between 2019 and 2022

Substance use contributes to approximately 70% of child welfare removals, creating a major need for behavioral health support.

#### **Family Well-Being and Community Support Needs**

Family and community perspectives were gathered through the 2024 Oklahoma Child Abuse Prevention Plan, authored by OPSR on behalf of OSDH. This effort included:

- 1,014 statewide survey responses
- Three community cafés
- Participation from families and professionals in all 77 counties

#### Key Themes Reported by Families

- Limited awareness of available supports
- Child care access ranked as the most significant barrier

- Need for mental health resources close to home
- Technology and broadband gaps, especially for rural families

### Family Support Through Head Start

HS/EHS programs contribute significantly to family well-being by providing:

- Comprehensive family engagement supports
- Developmental and health screenings
- Referrals to community services
- Mental health consultation
- Coordination with child welfare and other local partners

These services make HS/EHS a key part of Oklahoma’s statewide family support infrastructure as well as early learning.

### Early Intervention (Part C) and Specialized Supports

SoonerStart (Part C) served 3.7% of eligible infants and toddlers in FY23 - an increase from the prior year but below the national average of 6.8%. Service delivery remains timely, with 99.3% of services provided on schedule. A PDG-funded *Part C Access and Improvement Study*, underway through 2025, is evaluating participation patterns, referral pathways, and barriers to early identification, especially in rural and underserved regions.

## **Identified Gaps and Priority Needs**

Across all domains, the Needs Assessment identifies the following priority statewide needs:

### **1. Workforce Stability**

Low compensation and high turnover affect access, program quality, and provider sustainability.

## **2. Early Care and Education Access**

Shortages in infant–toddler care, rural care deserts, and rising costs create persistent barriers for families.

## **3. Maternal Health and Behavioral Health Supports**

Families need improved access to maternal care, mental health providers, and substance use treatment.

## **4. Family Navigation and Awareness**

Families consistently report difficulty identifying, understanding, and accessing available programs.

## **5. Child Welfare Prevention Supports**

Neglect remains the primary type of maltreatment, often linked with caregiver substance use and economic stress.

## **6. Regional Variation**

Local conditions vary widely, requiring tailored outreach and service strategies.

## **7. Coordination With Head Start/Early Head Start**

The Needs Assessment highlights opportunities to strengthen coordination across HS/EHS, child care, public pre-K, and health systems to support smooth transitions, shared data, and comprehensive family services.

### **How Needs Assessment Findings Inform Oklahoma’s System Building Priorities**

The 2024 Needs Assessment Update directly guides Oklahoma’s ECE system building efforts.

Based on these findings, the state will prioritize efforts that:

- Improve workforce compensation, recruitment, and retention
- Expand access to early care and education, particularly in rural and high-need areas



- Strengthen family navigation, communication systems, and local resource awareness
- Enhance coordination across maternal health, behavioral health, and child welfare systems
- Support collaboration with Head Start and Early Head Start on planning, enrollment pathways, transitions, and comprehensive services
- Improve cross-agency data sharing and alignment

These priorities reflect the most urgent needs affecting Oklahoma’s children and families.

## **Planned Improvements to the Needs Assessment Cycle Under the 2025 PDG Award**

### **Integration of Seven PDG-Funded Studies**

Through the 2022–2025 PDG award, Oklahoma completed **seven critical studies**, all of which will be fully integrated into the next Needs Assessment Update:

- Workforce Study
- True Cost of Care Study (RAND Corporation)
- 20-Year Fiscal Map
- Infant–Toddler Access & Family Choice Study
- Choosing Childbirth Evaluation
- Part C Access and Improvement Study
- Suspension and Expulsion Study

Each study contains findings that will strengthen the rigor of the next comprehensive Needs Assessment and directly inform strategies related to workforce, financing, early identification, transitions, early literacy, family experience, and system navigation.

### **School Readiness Indicator Refresh**

Under the 2025 PDG award, OPSR will update Oklahoma’s Birth–Five School Readiness Indicators. This refresh will align indicators with current system priorities, including:

- Workforce supply and retention
- Infant–toddler care availability
- Stability of early childhood businesses
- Transition readiness across early learning settings
- Early identification and screening
- Family experience and accessibility
- Quality indicators and access across the mixed-delivery system

The updated indicators will align with the Oklahoma School Readiness Pathway and support transparent, data-driven planning for state leaders, agencies, regions, and communities.

By integrating new evaluation findings, strengthening data systems, refreshing indicators, and reinforcing collaboration with key partners, including Head Start, Oklahoma is positioned to strengthen the SAC’s needs assessment that supports outcome strategies and continuous improvement of the early childhood system.

### **Description of the State’s Current B–5 Strategic Plan**

Oklahoma’s 2025 Early Childhood System Strategic Plan Update provides the statewide framework for aligning early learning, family support, and health systems to strengthen outcomes for children birth through age five. Developed by the Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness (OPSR), serving as the State Advisory Council, the plan fulfills federal Preschool Development Grant B–5 requirements and updates the original 2019 Comprehensive Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan synthesizes:

- Updated Needs Assessment findings
- Cross-agency plan analysis from 17 state agencies
- Preliminary Results of PDG-funded studies
- Family and provider voice from statewide surveys and community cafés
- Alignment with Oklahoma’s School Readiness Pathway—the system’s shared accountability framework

The plan articulates six strategic goals that for Oklahoma’s B–5 system:

1. Align the Early Childhood System
2. Coordinate and Sustain Funding Across Sectors
3. Center Families in Decision-Making and Service Delivery
4. Expand Access to Affordable, High-Quality ECCE
5. Integrate Health and Mental Health Supports
6. Strengthen and Support the ECCE Workforce

Each goal includes focus areas and implementation strategies informed by partner plans, community voice, and the 2024 Needs Assessment.

### **Alignment Between the Strategic Plan and the Needs Assessment**

The Strategic Plan directly addresses the gaps identified in the 2024 Needs Assessment Update and uses those findings to shape its strategic directions, demonstrated by the below examples:

#### **Workforce Challenges → Goal 6: Strengthen and Support the Workforce**

The Needs Assessment identifies workforce shortages, low compensation, and turnover as top statewide barriers. The Strategic Plan responds by prioritizing:

- Compensation, incentives, and benefits

- Career pathways and apprenticeships
- Regionally delivered professional development
- Health and wellness supports for ECE staff

#### **Child Care Deserts and Infant–Toddler Access → Goal 4: Expand Access**

With 55% of Oklahomans in child care deserts and shortages highest in rural areas, the Strategic Plan commits to:

- Stabilize supply, especially infant and toddler
- Updating subsidy rates based on the True Cost of Care Study
- Expanding inclusive practices
- Increasing flexible and non-traditional hours care
- Supporting parents’ navigation for early learning programs and opportunities

#### **Fragmented Systems → Goal 1: Align the Early Childhood System**

The Needs Assessment documents fragmentation across the early care and education, health, and family support systems. The Strategic Plan addresses this through:

- Strengthening family navigation supports and awareness of programs/services
- Expanding local/regional technical assistance hubs
- Improving transitions between ECE settings
- Progress on an Early Childhood Integrated Data System

#### **Health, Mental Health, and Substance Use → Goal 5: Integrate Supports**

The Needs Assessment findings that Oklahoma ranks 45th in women’s health and struggles with mental health and substance use shape the plan’s commitment to:

- Expanding prenatal and postpartum supports
- Embedding behavioral health within ECE settings

- Increasing developmental screening access
- Improving pathways between ECE and health systems

### **Family Navigation Barriers → Goal 3: Center Families in Decision-Making**

Families reported limited awareness of available services. The Strategic Plan includes:

- Statewide navigation and awareness efforts
- Local parent advisory councils
- Improved trusted-messenger strategies
- Parents as decision-makers and meaningful involvement

### **Need for Coordinated, Sustainable Funding → Goal 2: Finance Coordination**

The Fiscal Map analysis and Needs Assessment show shows opportunities to increase public funding and braid existing funding streams. The plan outlines strategies to:

- Develop a statewide finance plan
- Strengthen public-private partnerships
- Support locally braided funding models

OPSR and partners have worked to improve the alignment and connection of the Needs Assessment Update and Strategic Plan Update in order to more accurately reflect gaps and barriers in the ECE system and then form strategic areas for investment.

### **Cross-Sector Participation**

OPSR serves as Oklahoma's Early Childhood State Advisory Council, guiding the development and implementation of both the Needs Assessment and the Strategic Plan.

Further, the Strategic Plan positions Head Start and Early Head Start as essential partners within the mixed-delivery system. For example:

- The Oklahoma Head Start Collaboration Office participated in the plan update process.
- HS/EHS data were incorporated into system analysis and strategic recommendations.
- Goals 1, 3, 5, and 6 explicitly include HS/EHS coordination on transitions, mental health integration, family support, and workforce development.

## **Implementation Approach and Use of PDG B-5 Funds**

The Strategic Plan identifies clear next steps for statewide implementation:

### **1. Strengthen Collaborative Governance**

OPSR will lead implementation, aligning agency leadership and partners behind common priorities.

### **2. Align With Budget, Grant, and Legislative Opportunities**

The plan will guide funding proposals - including PDG investments - and legislative priorities.

### **3. Strengthen Accountability Through the School Readiness Pathway**

The Pathway serves as the shared measurement and monitoring system across all goals.

### **4. Engage Families and Communities**

Regional networks, parent advisory groups, and community partners will provide continuous feedback.

### **5. Refresh the Plan Every Two Years**

OPSR will use ongoing research, Needs Assessment updates, and PDG studies to keep the strategic plan current.

Oklahoma's 2025 Strategic Plan Update provides a unified, data-driven roadmap for strengthening early childhood services across the state. The plan:

- Directly responds to Needs Assessment findings
- Supports system alignment
- Guides sustainable financing
- Centers family experience
- Prioritizes access and workforce stability
- Uses rigorous PDG-funded evaluation
- Aligns with PDG priorities

Together, the Strategic Plan informed by the Needs Assessment establish the foundation for an aligned, data-driven, and family-centered B–5 system for Oklahoma.

#### Critical element 2: Outcome strategies to advance program priorities

Oklahoma’s 2024 Needs Assessment Update and 2025 SAC Strategic Plan Update reveal an early childhood system that is strong in pockets, but overall fragmented, inconsistently aligned, and difficult for families to navigate. Providers and families expressed a need for a more unified system, stronger partnerships across child care, Head Start/Early Head Start (HS/EHS), public schools, and Early Intervention; greater financial and workforce stability; enhanced early literacy supports; and more coordinated and linked data systems. In direct response to these identified needs and in alignment with the priorities outlined in the PDG B-5 NOFO, OPSR proposes a cohesive set of strategies across the three required categories. These strategies collectively strengthen system alignment, improve program availability and sustainability, and advance coordinated data and navigation supports essential for a seamless Birth-Five system.

### *Category 1: Reconcile Fragmented Elements Into a Unified System*

Oklahoma's Needs Assessment Update identifies fragmentation across the early childhood ecosystem as one of the most significant barriers impacting children and families. Families report confusion due to different eligibility processes, varying program expectations, and limited communication between providers. Providers - including HS/EHS, licensed child care programs, Tribal programs, and public schools - describe inconsistent standards and limited cross-sector coordination around transitions, safety expectations, and communication.

Because this is a one-year PDG award, OPSR has intentionally selected implementation-ready activities that build directly on completed PDG work and partner planning already underway. All Category 1 strategies are designed to launch in January 2026 and produce tangible statewide deliverables by December 2026, ensuring feasibility and high-impact results within the 12-month grant period. These strategies directly align with the NOFO priority to “create unified, seamless early learning experiences.”

#### **1. Strengthening SAC and Head Start Collaboration**

OPSR will enhance its partnership with the Head Start Collaboration Office (HSCO) to more fully elevate Head Start/Early Head Start within the statewide mixed-delivery system. The Needs Assessment revealed that families still lack a clear, accessible central source for information and enrollment pathways, and HS/EHS leaders highlighted inconsistent cross-agency communication.

Building on preliminary planning completed in 2024–2025, OPSR and HSCO will begin implementation in January 2026, enabling rapid progress within the award year. OPSR will support HSCO in redesigning its statewide website by June 2026 to



function as a family-first information hub that provides clear, up-to-date information on HS/EHS locations, enrollment pathways, wraparound services, and program strengths.

By Fall 2026, OPSR will integrate HS/EHS information into broader early childhood system navigation supports, aligning content with OKDHS, OSDE, OSDH, Tribal, and community partners. OPSR and HSCO will also host two statewide HS/EHS agency alignment briefings during the year to strengthen coordination and visibility.

2026 Deliverables:

- Update HSCO statewide HS/EHS communication materials and online media (July 2026)
- Integrate and align cross-agency HS/EHS content and resources (September 2026)
- Two statewide HS/EHS state agency convenings (December 2026)

This work strengthens the SAC's core responsibility to coordinate early childhood programs and infuses meaningful HS/EHS expertise into statewide system-building efforts.

## **2. Developing a Unified Statewide Transitions Framework (Including the Transition Family Advocate Pilot Project)**

The transition from HS/EHS, child care, or home-based programs into public Pre-K or kindergarten is one of the most significant stress points for families. The Needs Assessment documents that families experience confusion, administrative barriers, and the loss of trusted relationships during this time. Providers echoed that transition expectations differ significantly across programs and that cross-sector communication is inconsistent.

OPSR will leverage two years of prior Transition Summit work to finalize and implement Oklahoma’s Unified Transitions Framework within the 2026 award period that will include a third transition summit held in 2026. Beginning January - April 2026, OPSR will convene HS/EHS, licensed child care providers, EI/Part C, Part B/619, Tribal programs, and OSDE to finalize shared expectations, roles, and processes. The resulting framework will include standardized transition protocols, shared timelines, family-facing materials, and professional development resources. Regional professional development will launch in spring 2026.

To support family navigation, OPSR will pilot three Transition Family Advocate (TFA) projects with Sunbeam Family Services, Tulsa Educare, and CAP Tulsa – all HS grantees with large program reach. TFAs will guide approximately 100 families through enrollment, special education transitions, screening follow-ups, parent education, and school communication. Data collected through the pilot will inform statewide scaling.

2026 Deliverables:

- Finalized Unified Birth–Five Transitions Framework (April 2026)
- Transition Summit for all ECE professionals and families (TBD, 2026)
- Transition protocols, timelines, and family and provider resources/materials (May 2026)
- Transition PD to include regional focus (May 2026 – December 2026)
- 3 TFA pilots serving ~100 families (January –December 2026)
- Statewide expansion brief of evaluation and lesson learned (December 2026)

This strategy directly advances “seamless early learning experiences” and reflects strong feasibility within a one-year award.

### **3. Designing a Cohesive Statewide Financing Strategy for ECE**

Oklahoma’s Fiscal Mapping Project revealed a complex and fragmented fiscal landscape with overlapping funding streams and challenges in blending and braiding funds across HS/EHS, child care subsidies, Pre-K, Tribal programs, and family support programs. Providers report financial instability, inconsistent quality supports, and administrative burden caused by fragmented financing.

Because OPSR and agency partners have already completed significant groundwork, the state is well positioned to complete a cohesive financing strategy within the 12-month grant period. From January–August 2026, OPSR will convene a cross-agency workgroup - including OKDHS, OSDE, OSDH, HS/EHS, Tribal leaders, and private sector/philanthropy to identify high-priority alignment opportunities, conduct cost-modeling, and draft a statewide strategy for coordinated funding.

Between September–December 2026, OPSR will finalize the statewide financing roadmap, produce cross-agency fiscal materials, and align with strategic plan.

#### *2026 Deliverables:*

- Cross-agency financing workgroups (March 2026)
- Draft cohesive financing strategy (July 2026)
- Final statewide roadmap and operationalization (October 2026)
- Alignment with SAC strategic plan (December 2026)

This work provides Oklahoma with a practical path for effective and efficient deployment of public and private resources and improving the sustainability of the early childhood system.

#### **4. Head Start-Led Statewide Active Supervision and Safety Alignment Initiative**

Partner engagement with HS/EHS grantees and OKDHS Child Care Services reveals concern about inconsistent safety and supervision practices across the ECE system.

HS/EHS performance standards provide strong supervision guidance, but many child care programs lack standardized procedures, and OKDHS Licensing has reported increasing citations related to inadequate supervision.

OPSR will launch a Head Start led Active Supervision & Safety Alignment Initiative immediately in January 2026, building on early planning with HSCO, OKDHS Licensing, OSDE, and CCRRs. By June 2026, OPSR and partners will develop a cross-sector set of active supervision expectations, unified safety protocols, and provider-facing checklists and observation tools.

From July - December 2026, CCRRs and HS/EHS training teams will deliver statewide professional development and coaching, reaching at least 300 educators across early learning settings. OPSR will publish a Statewide Safety Alignment Guide and an implementation brief summarizing trends in training reach, common supervision challenges, and other lessons learned in order to refine professional development.

##### 2026 Deliverables:

- Unified statewide safety and active supervision standards (June 2026)
- Provider checklists, observation tools, and PD materials/resources (June 2026)

- Statewide training through CCRRs and HS/EHS (July–December 2026)
- Oklahoma Safety Alignment Guide and outcomes brief (December 2026)

By centering HS/EHS expertise, this initiative elevates Head Start as a leader within the mixed-delivery system and ensures consistent safety practices statewide.

### *Category 2: Expand Program Availability and Sustainability*

Oklahoma’s early childhood providers - especially licensed child care programs - continue to face significant challenges related to financial instability, workforce shortages, and limited access to coordinated quality improvement supports. HS/EHS grantees also identified a need for stronger shared business practices, improved community-level literacy engagement, and more cohesive workforce supports across the mixed-delivery system.

Because this is a single-year PDG award, OPSR has selected Category 2 strategies that are implementation-ready, build directly on existing infrastructure, and will generate measurable statewide impact by December 2026. Each strategy launches immediately in January 2026 and addresses critical gaps identified in the Needs Assessment while advancing NOFO priorities related to program sustainability, workforce stability, and family engagement.

#### **1. Statewide Business Supports for ECE Providers**

Through its administration of the CCR&R network, OPSR will launch a Statewide Business Support & Sustainability Academy designed to strengthen the operational and financial stability of ECE programs, including Head Start. The Needs Assessment revealed that providers often lack financial planning capacity, face challenges forecasting revenue and expenses, and experience difficulties navigating subsidy reimbursement, cost allocation, and personnel management.

Beginning in January 2026, OPSR will offer quarterly statewide business academies and ongoing coaching reaching at least 300 providers, including HS/EHS grantees, child care programs, and community-based early learning partners. Academy content will include budgeting tools, cost modeling templates, financial forecasting, HR best practices, subsidy utilization strategies, and long-term sustainability planning.

CCR&R Business Consultants will receive enhanced training in spring 2026 to build deeper specialization in business operations, enabling them to deliver more consistent, higher-quality technical assistance statewide. HS/EHS grantees will be invited to participate to strengthen their fiscal strategies, braided funding approaches, and partnership agreements with child care and school systems.

2026 Deliverables:

- Four statewide Business Support & Sustainability Academy sessions (January; Quarterly)
- At least 300 providers receiving business coaching (January – December 2026)
- Enhanced training for CCR&R Business Consultants (April 2026)
- Fiscal planning tools, cost-model templates, and sustainability guides (December 2026)
- Participation from HS/EHS programs to support cross-sector sustainability (December 2026)

This strategy strengthens operational resilience and responds directly to provider needs identified in the Needs Assessment and is a critical piece of the SAC Strategic Plan.

## **2. Strengthening Child Care Business Practices and Workforce Stability Through Integrated Supports (Strong Start Enhancement)**

Oklahoma’s early childhood providers face ongoing workforce shortages and instability. The Needs Assessment documented high turnover, limited access to coordinated coaching, and inconsistent understanding of workforce stabilization strategies. Currently, the Strong Start Program offers mental health and social–emotional support coaching, while CCR&R provides business and operational assistance, but these systems operate separately and therefore miss opportunities for stronger collective impact.

Under the 2025 PDG award, OPSR will fully integrate Oklahoma’s workforce recruitment and retention program, Oklahoma Strong Start, into CCR&R business support services beginning January 2026, enabling providers to receive coordinated assistance that strengthens both workforce stability and operational efficiency. CCR&R Business Consultants will be trained by April 2026 to help programs understand Strong Start eligibility, integrate Strong Start as a workforce benefit, and analyze cost savings linked to improved staff retention.

OPSR will launch a Rapid-Cycle Retention Pilot from June–December 2026, reaching about 100–150 educators in participating programs. The pilot will combine small retention bonuses with hands-on coaching, staff needs assessments, and progress check-ins. Program directors will also receive practical training on how to use Strong Start tools in everyday HR practices, including onboarding, scheduling, and QRIS-related quality improvement

### 2026 Deliverables:

- Integrated Strong Start and CCR&R business practice model (January 2026)

- Training for all CCR&R Business Consultants (by April 2026)
- Rapid-Cycle Retention Pilot (June - December 2026)
- Participation from 100–150 educators in retention pilot (December 2026)
- Workforce retention toolkit and guidance for embedding retention strategies into program operations (December 2026)

This coordinated approach strengthens workforce stability, reduces turnover, and enhances business viability.

### **3. Strengthen and Expand Community Capacity & Family Engagement Through Early Literacy**

The Needs Assessment and SAC partners highlight limited early literacy supports available to families, particularly in rural communities, and inconsistent early family engagement before age three. OPSR’s administration of Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library (DPIL) provides a strong statewide platform for tackling these gaps.

Under the 2025 PDG award, OPSR will strengthen and enhance DPIL beginning January 2026 by launching up to ten affiliates in rural communities and enhancing community and operational capacity of existing affiliates. OPSR will deliver monthly statewide professional development for DPIL local coordinators beginning in January 2026, focusing on early literacy engagement strategies, parent engagement, data tracking, and alignment with the state’s Science of Reading Framework, led by OSDE.

HS/EHS grantees will serve as key partners in DPIL enhancement by integrating book enrollment into intake activities and using DPIL as a transition and family engagement tool. OPSR will also develop family-facing literacy resources that link DPIL participation with child care, HS/EHS, and public school early learning programs.



Additionally, OPSR will work with partners to engage the growing home-school and educational choice community in Oklahoma who may not be connected to a local education agency.

2026 Deliverables:

- Up to 10 new DPIL affiliates launched (December 2026)
- Professional development for local coordinators to build capacity (January – December 2026; monthly)
- Statewide literacy resource materials for all families (June 2026)
- HS/EHS improved participation in DPIL enrollment engagement (June 2026)
- Increased enrollment and outreach in rural and underserved communities (December 2026)
- Alignment with Science of Reading evidence-based framework (December 2026)

DPIL enhancement strengthens early literacy, supports family engagement, and serves as a gateway to the wider early childhood system for all families.

*Category 3: Align or Share Information and Data Systems*

Oklahoma's early childhood data systems remain fragmented across agencies, using different definitions, formats, and reporting structures. Families report difficulty finding clear, integrated information about available programs, and agencies express a need for more aligned data to inform planning, resource allocation, and policy decisions. The Needs Assessment underscores persistent gaps in cross-agency data coordination, family-facing transparency, and shared indicators.

Because the PDG B-5 award period is limited to January - December 2026, OPSR has structured Category 3 strategies to build on prior PDG supported work, leverage existing partnerships, and produce achievable, high-impact data system deliverables within a single year. These strategies directly advance the 2025 PDG priority to strengthen data sharing and coordinated system navigation.

### **1. Unifying and Aligning Oklahoma’s Birth–Five Data and Indicators**

As the State Advisory Council, OPSR will expand its leadership role in consolidating and aligning Birth-Five indicators across agencies. Evidence from the Needs Assessment indicates inconsistent indicator definitions, limited cross-agency reporting, and a lack of accessible data resources for families, policymakers, and providers.

Beginning in January 2026, OPSR will convene a cross-agency data workgroup (OKDHS, OSDE, OSDH, Tribal partners, HS/EHS, and OU E-TEAM) to refine Oklahoma’s statewide Birth–Five indicators aligned with the School Readiness Pathway. By June 2026, OPSR will produce updated indicator definitions and metrics, shared data templates, and agency-approved alignment guides.

Between July - December 2026, OPSR will publish public facing dashboards, data visualizations, and analytic briefs, transforming the annual report from a compliance document into a dynamic, accessible policy tool. Price Lang Public Relations will support communications, while OU-ETEAM will provide indicator expertise, data analysis and data visualization.

#### 2026 Deliverables:

- Cross-agency data alignment workgroup (January 2026)

- Aligned statewide Birth - Five indicators and data templates (June 2026)
- User-friendly statewide dashboards and data visualizations (September 2026)
- SAC Annual Report redesigned as a strategic communication tool (November 2026)

This work addresses core fragmentation and improves transparency for all stakeholders.

## **2. Updating Oklahoma’s ECIDS Plan**

Oklahoma’s 2018 Early Childhood Integrated Data System (ECIDS) plan remains foundational but does not reflect current technologies, agency systems, or statewide priorities. The Needs Assessment and partner feedback identifies significant demand for an updated ECIDS roadmap rooted in modern data governance, current technologies and applications, interoperability, and family experience.

Beginning in January 2026, OPSR, supported by OU’s Oklahoma Education Policy Institute, will conduct a structured review of the 2018 ECIDS plan and agency system architecture. By April 2026, OPSR will develop a set of updates to the plan to include technical specifications, governance guidelines, and cost-model options. Between May–September 2026, OPSR will work with agency partners to finalize a revised ECIDS plan incorporating:

- Updated use-cases as described in the current ECIDS plan
- Phased technical implementation timelines,
- Interoperability options,
- Privacy and data-sharing safeguards
- Full and scaled build-out investment necessary, and
- Opportunities for AI-supported analytics.

OPSR and partners will also gather family input through focus groups and surveys to ensure the ECIDS vision reflects family expectations for privacy, usability, and accessibility - strengthening alignment to PDG priorities around family-centered systems design.

By December 2026, OPSR will publish the updated ECIDS plan and present it to agency leadership to support 2027 implementation planning.

2026 Deliverables:

- Updated ECIDS technical specifications and governance guidelines (April 2026)
- Family-informed privacy and usability recommendations (September 2026)
- Revised statewide ECIDS plan with phased implementation (November 2026)
- Final updated ECIDS plan, report, and presentations for agency leadership, funders, and elected officials (December 2026)

This strategy ensures that Oklahoma has a modern, actionable ECIDS plan for future data integration.

### **3. Supporting OKDHS's Early Childhood Portal and Unified Eligibility Feasibility Study**

The OKDHS Early Childhood Portal represents an opportunity to improve family navigation and streamline access to early childhood and human services programs.

However, significant design and development work remains in order to deliver a fully accessible, integrated platform that aims to simplify families' experience with human services eligibility and program enrollment.

Starting in January 2026, OPSR will support OKDHS critical portal development tasks, including improving user experience, enhancing accessibility, strengthening

content, and aligning the portal’s design with broader early childhood initiatives. OPSR’s communications and family engagement partners will support usability testing with a wide reach of family perspective.

Concurrently, OPSR will partner with OKDHS on the Unified Eligibility & Enrollment System Feasibility Study, which will assess the technical and operational feasibility of creating a statewide “One Front Door” system, a specific use-case for ECIDS. Between February - August 2026, OPSR will assist with analysis of existing systems, options for system architecture, family experience mapping, and cost-modeling. In fall 2026, OPSR will help produce a final feasibility report and recommendations for phased implementation.

2026 Deliverables:

- Improved usability and accessibility features for the OKDHS Early Childhood Portal (January – June 2026)
- Content updates and family-centered design enhancements (June 2026)
- Usability testing sessions conducted with families statewide (August 2026)
- Final Unified Eligibility & Enrollment Feasibility Report (December 2026))
- Recommendations for phased development of a statewide “One Front Door” system for agency leadership and Oklahoma legislature (December 2026)

These activities directly support PDG’s emphasis on coordinated data systems and improved, family-centered navigation.

#### **4. Family Engagement and Voice Throughout All Strategies**

The Oklahoma Commission on Children and Youth (OCCY) has served as a core partner in PDG B-5 efforts during the 2022 award period and will continue in this role for the 2025 PDG implementation. As OPSR's key family engagement partner, OCCY brings deep expertise and statewide infrastructure to ensure authentic family voice informs all system strategies.

OCCY has made substantial progress in embedding family perspectives across PDG projects and the broader early childhood system. Their team includes staff highly trained in the Strengthening Families Framework and Protective Factors and Parent Café facilitation, enabling them to elevate parent insights and build leadership and decision-making pathways for families. Through these strengths, OCCY will support partner agencies in co-designing tools, frameworks, and navigation supports that reflect all family experiences and needs.

OCCY's statutory role further strengthens its impact. As a member of the State Advisory Council (SAC) and the legislatively mandated administrator of the state Parent Partnership Board, OCCY brings structured, sustained mechanisms for incorporating family-first perspective across all child- and family-serving agencies. In addition, OCCY, like OPSR, holds a cabinet-level seat on the Human Services Cabinet, ensuring that PDG activities align with statewide priorities and that family voice is consistently present in system-level decision-making.

Through this partnership, OPSR and OCCY will ensure that family engagement and lived experience are embedded throughout every PDG strategy - from transitions and literacy supports to safety alignment, financing, and data modernization.

Additionally, OPSR will support the family voice work of the Oklahoma Family Network and Lilyfield in order to gain specialized parent insight of children with disabilities and welfare involved families.

Together, these strategies create a comprehensive, coherent approach that addresses the core challenges identified in Oklahoma’s Needs Assessment, SAC partner input, and advances the statewide vision of the SAC Strategic Plan. These strategies will unify fragmented elements, improve transitions and safety, strengthen financial and workforce stability, expand literacy and family engagement, and modernize statewide data and navigation systems. Additionally, the strategies significantly elevate the role of HS/EHS within the early childhood ecosystem. Through this integrated set of high-impact, achievable, and strategically aligned activities, OPSR will build lasting capacity across Oklahoma’s early childhood system and improve outcomes for children and families statewide.

### Critical element 3: Tracking project impact

#### **Approach to Assessing Project Results**

OPSR will implement a comprehensive, statewide performance measurement and evaluation system grounded in the Oklahoma School Readiness Pathway, the framework that anchors the 2025 Strategic Plan Update and defines the conditions, policies, and system capacities necessary for children to thrive birth through five. This approach quantifies progress toward PDG B–5 priorities, measures outcomes identified in the Strategic Plan, supports continuous quality improvement, and fosters systemwide alignment across early care and education, health, and family support agencies.

The Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness (OPSR) will implement an evaluation plan to assess implementation quality and guide continuous improvement across all PDG B-5 activities. Under this award, OPSR will partner with the University of Oklahoma's Oklahoma Center for Education Policy (OCEP), which brings expertise in mixed-methods evaluation and continuous quality improvement cycles. OCEP will serve as the external evaluation partner and will lead evaluation activities. Evaluation findings will be used to inform ongoing decision-making, strengthen cross-agency coordination, and support the state's continuous quality improvement cycle. Leveraging OCEP ensures rigorous, independent evaluation capacity and positions Oklahoma to track meaningful system-level progress and advance high-quality early childhood outcomes.

### **Quantifying and Measuring Progress Toward PDG B–5 Priorities**

OPSR will refine and publish a unified set of statewide Birth to Five indicators aligned with the Strategic Plan's six goals to measure system-level progress over time. Indicators will quantify:

- Alignment and transitions across the mixed-delivery system (Goal 1)
- Financing coherence and capacity (Goal 2)
- Family engagement and voice (Goal 3)
- Access to child care and Pre-K (Goal 4)
- Health and mental health integration and screenings (Goal 5)
- Workforce compensation, stability, and credentialing (Goal 6)



These indicators directly support federal PDG B to 5 program priorities related to system alignment, workforce stability, family engagement, governance, and coordinated data.

### **Measuring Strategic Plan Outcomes and Comparing to Baseline Data**

Baseline data sources, including the 2024 Needs Assessment Update, the True Cost of Care Study, and the 2025 Fiscal Map, provide starting points for measuring change in access, affordability, workforce conditions, and child/family outcomes. Examples include:

- Child care deserts (55% statewide; 68% rural) → measured annually
- Workforce wages (\$11.61/hr vs. living wage \$19.33) → tracked for improvement
- Developmental screening rates (35.2%) → monitored across sectors
- State/federal funding composition and trends in distribution shifts → tracked against Fiscal Map baselines
- Family-reported service navigation barriers → measured through ongoing surveys and TFA pilots

Annual indicators will compare progress to these baselines, showing year-over-year improvement.

### **Monitoring Implementation, Outputs, and Fidelity**

Each PDG B to 5 strategy will include quarterly tracking of:

- Implementation milestones
- Participation counts (providers, families, programs)

- Quality metrics and fidelity checks
- Cross-agency engagement
- Family-centered measures informed by lived experience (as emphasized in community cafés)

OPSR will use rapid-cycle learning and quarterly performance reviews through the SAC governance structure to adjust implementation and improve results.

### **Tracking Trends in ECE Program Supply, Demand, and Use**

Using updated statewide datasets and SAC partnerships, OPSR will track:

- Licensed capacity, openings, closures, deserts
- Workforce supply, turnover, pipeline participation
- Pre-K access and alignment with community programs
- HS/EHS enrollment, waitlists, and transitions
- Child care subsidy utilization and cost modeling data
- Family demand signals from the Early Childhood Portal and community feedback loops

This aligns directly with the Strategic Plan’s emphasis on using data and shared accountability systems to drive continuous improvement and track progress.

## **Integrating Head Start in Tracking and Measurement**

In accordance with SAC responsibilities and the Strategic Plan's alignment goals, HS/EHS grantees will:

- Co-develop shared transition indicators
- Contribute enrollment, attendance, and family engagement data
- Participate in safety alignment outcome tracking
- Align Early Learning Outcomes Framework (ELOF) indicators with statewide literacy and readiness metrics

This ensures HS/EHS programs are fully integrated into statewide measurement systems, not tracked separately.

## **Building on and Updating Data Systems and Analytics Infrastructure**

OPSR will modernize and expand statewide data capacity by:

- Updating the Early Childhood Integrated Data System (ECIDS) plan
- Aligning ECIDS indicators with the School Readiness Pathway benchmarks
- Supporting OKDHS's Early Childhood Portal and the Unified Eligibility Feasibility Study
- Incorporating interoperability standards recommended in the Strategic Plan
- Adding new dashboards, regional data views, and family-facing reports

- Ensuring data captures rural, Tribal, racial/ethnic, and income-based disparities identified in the Needs Assessment

This responds directly to Strategic Plan directives to build data infrastructure for accountability, results, and continuous learning.

### **Using Assessment to Foster Cross-Agency Integration**

The SAC will use performance data to drive coordinated action and systemwide alignment, consistent with the Strategic Plan's systemwide drivers:

1. Cross-sector alignment
2. Prevention and early intervention
3. Community capacity
4. Family-centered navigation
5. Health and behavioral health integration
6. Workforce stability
7. Shared data and accountability systems

Quarterly reviews, shared dashboards, and joint planning sessions will use these data to:

- Align policies and investments
- Reduce duplication
- Improve transitions

- Address disparities across geography and race/ethnicity
- Coordinate shared services and funding strategies

Assessment thus becomes an engine for long-term system coherence and sustained statewide improvement.

#### Bonus: Policies supporting child development across systems

##### *BONUS AREA 1: Operational State Advisory Council (OPSR)*

The Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness (OPSR) is Oklahoma’s legislatively established State Advisory Council (SAC) for Early Childhood. The Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness Act (10 O.S. §640.1) creates the OPSR Board, charges it with promoting school readiness through community-based efforts, and explicitly designates it as the state’s Early Childhood Advisory Council responsible for fulfilling the duties outlined in the federal Head Start Act.

OPSR operates as a multi-agency governance body that includes leadership from Oklahoma Human Services (OKDHS), the Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE), the Oklahoma State Department of Health (OSDH), Tribal early childhood partners, Head Start/Early Head Start, child care providers, philanthropy, higher education, and family representatives. The Board meets regularly to review statewide data, oversee the Birth-Five Needs Assessment and Strategic Plan, and align agency initiatives across child care, HS/EHS, Pre-K, health, mental health, and family support systems.

PDG B-5 funding strengthens OPSR’s SAC role by supporting structured cross-agency workgroups on transitions, system financing, workforce stabilization (including Strong Start), early literacy alignment, safety and active supervision standards, data modernization, and family engagement (through OCCY). These functions are not ad hoc projects; they are woven into OPSR’s legislated mission and the state’s formal early childhood governance structure, ensuring that PDG investments build on a stable, permanent policy foundation that will continue beyond the grant period.

#### *BONUS AREA 2: Evidence-Based Early Literacy Instruction*

Oklahoma has made significant statewide policy commitments to evidence-based early literacy, most notably through the Reading Sufficiency Act, recently strengthened and rebranded as the Strong Readers Act. This law requires the use of scientifically based reading instruction, expands assessment and intervention for K-3 students, and phases out non-evidence-based “three-cueing” practices beginning in the 2025-2026 school year. These policies signal a strong state commitment to the Science of Reading and align with PDG priorities for strengthening early literacy from birth through age eight.

PDG B-5 resources enable OPSR to extend this literacy work down into the Birth–Five system and across the mixed-delivery landscape:

- **Statewide DPIL Coordination and Expansion:** OPSR serves as the statewide partner for Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library (DPIL), coordinating dozens of local affiliates and using PDG resources to expand into underserved communities. OPSR aligns DPIL outreach and parent guidance with the state’s Birth–Five Literacy Continuum and Science of Reading principles, ensuring families receive high-quality books paired with

evidence-based language and literacy practices regardless of whether their children are in HS/EHS, child care, Pre-K, or home-based care.

- **Cross-Agency Literacy Alignment:** OPSR collaborates with the OSDE Early Childhood Team and the Head Start Collaboration Office to integrate DPIL enrollment into program intake, align supports with the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework, and develop cross-system family literacy resources. This alignment connects state literacy policy (Strong Readers Act) to early childhood programs and strengthens continuity from Birth-Five through early elementary grades.
- **Pre-K Literacy Coaching and Professional Learning:** Working with OSDE, OPSR supports science-of-reading-aligned guidance and coaching for educators in school-based Pre-K and community-based early learning settings. PDG B-5 funding expands access to shared literacy modules, coaching templates, and joint professional learning, increasing the number of educators using evidence-based literacy practices in classrooms that serve four-year-olds.

Through these coordinated efforts, Oklahoma leverages its Strong Readers policy framework and PDG B-5 investments to create a consistent, evidence-based literacy pathway across early childhood and early elementary, advancing both state and federal early literacy goals.

### *BONUS AREA 3: Supports for Foster Children in Early Care and Education*

Oklahoma's child welfare and early childhood systems are closely linked to ensure that young children in foster care have access to stable, high-quality care and early learning environments.

Oklahoma Human Services (OKDHS) provides child care subsidy as part of the protective service plan, including for foster and kinship caregivers, and offers specialized support such as

therapeutic child care when recommended by a mental health professional. These policies make early care and education a core component of stability for children in foster placements.

PDG B-5 resources strengthen these supports in several ways:

- The OKDHS Early Childhood Portal and coordinated eligibility effort is supported in part by PDG B-5 systems-building work simplifies access to child care subsidy and related benefits (e.g., SNAP, TANF) for families, including foster and kinship caregivers who often juggle multiple applications and time-sensitive placement changes. By helping OKDHS refine design, usability, and cross-program linkages, OPSR increases the likelihood that foster children can access child care and early learning supports quickly and consistently.
- Transition and Navigation Supports: Proposed PDG-funded Transition Family Advocate pilots will provide hands-on navigation assistance for families, including those with children in foster or kinship care, as they move into public Pre-K and kindergarten. Advocates will help families complete enrollment, coordinate with schools, and maintain continuity of services, reducing disruptions that disproportionately affect children involved in child welfare.
- OPSR's administration of the Oklahoma Strong Start Program, authorized by House Bill 2778 and launched with PDG support, provides free child care to eligible staff working in licensed child care facilities and expands access to the child care subsidy program without copayments for participating workers. By stabilizing the early childhood workforce—especially in programs serving children with complex needs—Strong Start helps ensure that foster children experience more consistent, trauma-informed classroom environments.



- The Oklahoma Commission on Children and Youth (OCCY), a SAC member, administers the state Parent Partnership Board and brings foster and kinship family perspectives into system design, including PDG-supported work on transitions, navigation, and family engagement.

Together, these policies and PDG-supported activities enhance access, continuity, and stability for children in foster care across Oklahoma’s Birth–Five system.

#### *BONUS AREA 4: Nutritional Services for Children and Families*

Oklahoma has a robust landscape of nutrition programs that intersect with early care and education, including the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) administered by the Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE), the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) administered through OSDH and community partners, and nutrition services embedded in HS/EHS and Tribal early childhood programs. CACFP reimburses participating child care centers and family child care homes for serving meals and snacks that meet USDA nutrition standards, increasing access to healthy food for children in care.

Through PDG B-5, OPSR strengthens the alignment between the early childhood system and nutritional services in several ways:

- **System Coordination and Referral Pathways:** As SAC, OPSR convenes partners that administer CACFP, WIC, HS/EHS, Tribal nutrition initiatives, and local food programs to align outreach and referral pathways. Family-facing materials developed through PDG efforts (e.g., navigation tools, DPIL engagement touchpoints, OCCY-facilitated Parent

Cafés) include information about accessing nutrition supports alongside early learning, health, and developmental services.

- Integration with the Early Childhood Portal: PDG-supported work on the OKDHS Early Childhood Portal and unified eligibility feasibility study improves families' ability to learn about and connect with nutrition-related benefits such as SNAP and, where possible, WIC and CACFP participating programs through a single-entry point. This is particularly important for families with infants and toddlers, families experiencing homelessness, and caregivers in rural and frontier communities where food access is more limited.
- HS/EHS programs bring federally required nutrition standards and comprehensive services to the SAC table, while CACFP sponsors and child nutrition partners support providers in meeting meal quality requirements. PDG B-5 investments in family literacy, transitions, and family engagement provide additional channels to share information about healthy eating, breastfeeding supports, and community food resources such as summer EBT and local food distribution initiatives.

By intentionally connecting nutrition programs, early learning settings, and PDG-funded family engagement and navigation efforts, Oklahoma strengthens its ability to support healthy development and well-being for children Birth-Five and their families, particularly those facing economic hardship or living in food insecure communities.

## Project timeline and milestones

Critical Element	Task	Subtask	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
Critical element 1: Statewide ECE needs assessment and strategic plan	Category 1: Needs Assessment	1. Review and assurance that it is current and complete; update as necessary	Milestone - Completed review by 2/28/2026											
	Category 2: Strategic Plan	1. Review and assurance that it is current and complete; update as necessary	Milestone - Completed review by 2/28/2026											
Critical Element 2: Outcome strategies to advance program priorities	Category 1: Reconcile Fragmented Elements into a Unified System	1. Strengthening SAC and Head Start Collaboration						Update HSCCO statewide HSI/IEHS communication materials and online media			Integrate and align cross-agency HSI/IEHS content and resources			Two statewide HSI/IEHS state agency convenings
	Category 1: Reconcile Fragmented Elements into a Unified System	2. Developing a Unified Statewide Transitions Framework (Including the Transition Family Advocate Pilot)	Two TFA pilots serving "100 families (through December 2025)			Finalized Unified Birth-Five Transitions Framework (April 2026)	Transition protocols, timelines, and family and provider resource materials							Statewide expansion brief of evaluation and lesson learned
	Category 1: Reconcile Fragmented Elements into a Unified System	3. Designing a Cohesive Statewide Financing Strategy for ECE			Cross-agency financing workgroups					Draft cohesive financing strategy			Final statewide roadmap and operationalization	Alignment with SAC strategic plan
	Category 1: Reconcile Fragmented Elements into a Unified System	4. Head Start-Led Statewide Active Supervision & Safety Alignment Initiative						Unified statewide safety and active supervision standards	Statewide training through CCR&R and HSI/IEHS					Oklahoma Safety Alignment Guide and outcomes brief
	Category 2: Expand Program Availability and Sustainability	1. Statewide Business Supports for ECE Providers (Including Head Start)	- Four statewide Business Support & Sustainability Academy sessions - Quarterly - At least 300 providers receiving business coaching (through December 2026)			Enhanced training for CCR&R Business Consultants								- Fiscal planning tools, cost-model templates, and sustainability guides - Participation from HSI/IEHS programs to support cross-sector sustainability
	Category 2: Expand Program Availability and Sustainability	2. Strengthening Child Care Business Practices and Workforce Stability Through Integrated Supports (Strong Start Enhancement)	Integrated Strong Start and CCR&R business practice model			Training for all CCR&R Business Consultants		Rapid-Cycle Retention Micro-Incentive Pilot (through December)						- Participation from 100–150 educators in retention cycles - Workforce retention toolkit and guidance for embedding retention strategies into program operations
	Category 2: Expand Program Availability and Sustainability	3. Strengthen and Expand Community Capacity & Family Engagement Through Early Literacy (DPL Expansion)	Professional development for local coordinators to build capacity (Monthly)					- statewide literacy resource materials for all families - HSI/IEHS improved Participation in DPL enrollment engagement						- Up to 5 new DPL affiliates launched - Increased enrollment and outreach in rural and underserved communities - Alignment with Science of Reading evidence-based framework
	Category 3: Align or Share Information and Data Systems	1. Utilizing and Aligning Oklahoma's Birth-Five Data and Indicators	Cross-agency data alignment workgroup					Aligned statewide Birth - Five indicators and data templates			User-friendly statewide dashboards and data visualizations		SAC Annual Report redesigned as a strategic communication tool	
	Category 3: Align or Share Information and Data Systems	2. Updating and Modernizing OPSR's ECIDS Plan				Updated ECIDS technical specifications and governance guidelines					Family-informed privacy and usability recommendations		Revised statewide ECIDS plan with phased implementation	Final ECIDS report and presentations for agency leadership
	Category 3: Align or Share Information and Data Systems	3. Supporting DHS's Early Childhood Portal and Unified Eligibility Feasibility Study	Improved usability and accessibility features for the OKDHS Early Childhood Portal (through June 2026)					Content updates and family-centered design enhancements		Usability testing sessions conducted with families statewide				- Final Unified Eligibility & Enrollment Feasibility Report - Recommendations for phased development of a statewide "One Front Door" system for agency leadership and Oklahoma legislature
Critical Element 3: Tracking project impact	Category 1: Assessing Project Results	1. Quantify and measure progress toward PDG B-5 program priorities	Contract with OU OK Center for Ed Policy by January; quarterly tracking begins			Quarterly report by April 2026			Quarterly report by July 2026			Quarterly report by October 2026		
	Category 1: Assessing Project Results	2. Measure outcomes defined in the strategic plan and compare them to baseline data, as applicable	Contract with OU OK Center for Ed Policy by January; quarterly tracking begins			Quarterly report by April 2026			Quarterly report by July 2026			Quarterly report by October 2026		
	Category 1: Assessing Project Results	3. Monitor progress and success of outcome or strategy outputs and implementation	Contract with OU OK Center for Ed Policy by January; quarterly tracking begins			Quarterly report by April 2026			Quarterly report by July 2026			Quarterly report by October 2026		
	Category 1: Assessing Project Results	4. Track trends in ECE program supply, demand, and use	Contract with OU OK Center for Ed Policy by January; quarterly tracking begins			Quarterly report by April 2026			Quarterly report by July 2026			Quarterly report by October 2026		
	Category 1: Assessing Project Results	5. Integrate Head Start grantees, services, and funding when tracking project results	Contract with OU OK Center for Ed Policy by January; quarterly tracking begins			Quarterly report by April 2026			Quarterly report by July 2026			Quarterly report by October 2026		
	Category 1: Assessing Project Results	6. Build on, update, and/or modify existing data sources, information technologies, and analytic systems infrastructure	Contract with OU OK Center for Ed Policy by January; quarterly tracking begins			Quarterly report by April 2026			Quarterly report by July 2026			Quarterly report by October 2026		
	Category 1: Assessing Project Results	7. Use the required assessment of project results to foster integration across ECE agencies and entities	Contract with OU OK Center for Ed Policy by January; quarterly tracking begins			Quarterly report by April 2026			Quarterly report by July 2026			Quarterly report by October 2026		

### Organizational capacity

The Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness (OPSR) has the demonstrated organizational capacity, statutory authority, infrastructure, and experience necessary to lead the coordinated implementation of Oklahoma’s Preschool Development Grant Birth–Five (PDG B-5) Building Grant. While the Oklahoma Department of Human Services (OKDHS) will serve as a substantial recipient to meet federal requirements, OPSR is the state’s designated entity for coordinating Oklahoma’s early childhood system and is uniquely positioned to guide, manage, and sustain the work outlined in the PDG B-5 Building Grant.

OPSR’s mission - to coordinate an early childhood system that strengthens families and ensures all children are ready for school - directly aligns with the goals and required activities of the PDG B-5 Building Grant. Established through the Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness Act (Title 10 O.S. § 640), OPSR was created specifically to bring coherence and collaboration to the state’s early childhood landscape and systems.

OPSR serves as Oklahoma’s State Early Childhood Advisory Council (SAC), the federally recognized body responsible for advising on B-5 system coordination. This statutory role gives OPSR both the authority and infrastructure to convene cross-agency partners, engage a broad range of stakeholders, analyze system performance, and make statewide recommendations—core functions that mirror PDG B-5 grant expectations.

OPSR has a strong track record of successfully managing, coordinating, and implementing statewide early childhood initiatives, including serving as the recipient and administrator of Oklahoma’s initial PDG B-5 Planning Grant (\$3.1M) and being the lead entity for the PDG B-5 Implementation Grant (2022) under OKDHS. Our state updated a comprehensive needs

assessment and strategic plan and launched multiple system-improvement efforts that laid the foundation for current PDG B-5 priorities.

In addition, OPSR leads or coordinates several essential components of Oklahoma's B-5 system, including:

- Statewide Child Care Resource & Referral (CCRR) Network, funded by OKDHS and implemented by OPSR
- Oklahoma Clearinghouse for Early Childhood Success, the state's hub for best practices and professional implementation
- Oklahoma Strong Start, early childhood education for the early childhood education workforce. This workforce recruitment and retention support was initially implemented with PDG B-5 funds and will be sustained by a state investment from the Oklahoma Legislature.
- Major cross-agency parent and provider engagement strategies, including partnerships with OCCY's Parent Partnership Board
- Public-private partnerships to leverage philanthropic investment, support innovation, and ensure statewide reach

Through these functions, OPSR maintains the relationships, data, and operational capacity necessary to convene agencies, support local engagement, parent choice, and drive coordinated system improvement at scale.

OPSR's long-standing partnership with and under the umbrella of OKDHS, positions it as the natural coordinating entity for PDG B-5 activities. While OKDHS—as the largest state agency—manages large federal funding streams and oversees critical early childhood programs

such as child care subsidies, licensing, and QRIS, OPSR complements this operational role by ensuring coherence across the broader B-5 landscape to include Head Start and Early Head Start.

OPSR routinely partners with:

- OKDHS (Child Care Services)
- Oklahoma State Department of Education
- Oklahoma State Department of Health
- OCCY and the Parent Partnership Board
- Tribal early childhood programs
- Head Start and Early Head Start through the Head Start Collaboration Office
- Home visiting programs
- Philanthropic partners

This cross-sector leadership is essential for carrying out PDG B-5 tasks such as system alignment with data and parent knowledge of options for birth through five—all areas where OPSR brings unparalleled capacity.

Oklahoma's governance structure supports OPSR's central leadership in B-5 coordination as the State Early Childhood Advisory Council to advance system coherence. This structure ensures that OPSR remains at the center of decision-making, stakeholder alignment, and system-level strategy throughout the project period.

As the coordinating entity for the state's early childhood system, OPSR has deep experience in:

- Conducting statewide assessments
- Supporting data integration and system alignment
- Establishing standards of accountability

- Promoting best practices
- Reporting to legislative and executive leadership
- Ensuring continuous system improvement

These functions directly support PDG B-5 requirements and position OPSR to lead the project with transparency, rigor, and statewide alignment.

OPSR's history of successful administration of the initial PDG B-5 Planning Grant and lead entity with the PDG B-5 Implementation Grant, management of statewide early childhood initiatives, and governance of the state's SAC uniquely qualifies it to guide Oklahoma's PDG B-5 activities, ensure broad stakeholder engagement, and sustain long-term system improvements in Early Childhood Education for children and families.

#### Plan for oversight of federal award funds and activities

##### **Financial and program management**

OPSR has a strong track record of successfully managing, coordinating, and implementing statewide early childhood initiatives, including serving as the recipient and administrator of Oklahoma's initial PDG B-5 Planning Grant (\$3.1M) and being the lead entity for the PDG B-5 Implementation Grant (2022) under OKDHS. The current financial and program management teams consist of Executive Leadership and Project Managers with experience working on past PDG B-5 grants.

The Director of Early Childhood Systems and the Chief Financial Officer, along with their respective staff members, will work in tandem on oversight. They share dual responsibility on all approvals, and both are required to sign off on all decisions and transactions involving the grant award.

OPSR uses written procedures for all aspects of financial and program management; exercising control over and accountability for all funds, property, and assets to ensure they are used solely for authorized purposes.

Records are maintained to sufficiently identify the amount, source, and expenditure of Federal funds for Federal awards. These records contain information necessary to identify Federal awards, authorizations, financial obligations, unobligated balances, as well as assets, expenditures, income, and interest. All records are supported by source documentation.

OPSR utilizes QuickBooks Enterprise as their accounting system of record. SharePoint is utilized for collaborative record keeping. All records are backed up to the cloud and a third party contractor provides additional cyber security measures to protect the organizations digital records. We have a cyber security policy, data recovery plan and cyber insurance.

As with past PDG B-5 grants, the project management team at OPSR works with all subrecipients to demonstrate achievement of program goals and objectives, share lessons learned, improve program outcomes, and foster the adoption of promising practices.

### **Property management**

All assets with a useful life of greater than three (3) years and costing more than five thousand dollars (\$5,000) per item will be capitalized and will be recorded in the fixed asset records, per our current financial policies. Any asset that does not meet this criterion will be expensed, such as supplies, minor equipment, repairs, or maintenance.



The cost basis of furniture and equipment assets will include all charges relating to the purchase of the assets including the purchase price, freight charges, and installation or date of use if applicable.

Any Capital expenditures made by grant recipients who are subrecipients are deemed expenditures to acquire capital assets or expenditures to make additions, improvements, modifications, replacements, rearrangements, reinstallations, renovations, or alterations to capital assets that materially increase their value or useful life. When approved as a direct charge, capital expenditures will be charged in the period in which the expenditure is incurred, or as otherwise compliant with 2 CFR 200.313-Equipment.

For grant management purposes, equipment is defined as an article of nonexpendable, tangible personal property having a useful life of more than 1 year and an acquisition cost which equals or exceeds the lesser of the capitalization level established by the Subrecipient for financial statement purposes, or \$10,000, pursuant to 2 CFR 200.439 -- Equipment and other capital expenditures. If equipment is purchased by the Subrecipient, each purchase must have an established inventory system and disposition process compliant with 2 CFR Part 200.313.

Unusable assets will be evaluated and may be disposed of in a manner following Uniform Guidance, when required, and reflected in the Financial Statements. When disposing of property originally purchased with federal funds, 2 CFR 200.439 will be followed in determining current per unit fair market value of \$10,000 or more. OPSR will seek written approval before disposing of any capital asset purchased with federal funds, utilizing the SF-428 or SF-429 when required. OPSR will safeguard all capital assets against damage, theft or loss and ensure that any applicable registrations, licensing and insurance are adequate.

## **Procurement**

In general, OPSR conforms with the Code of Federal Regulations 2 C.F.R 200.317 - 200.327, unless there is specific grant program guidance which takes precedence. For purchases under \$10,000 OPSR will use due diligence to procure goods or services. Purchases equaling \$10,000 or more but less than \$250,000 will require a comparison of sources for goods and services, utilizing 3 or more quotes or estimates. Any purchases equaling \$250,000 or more will use formal procurement procedures. In all cases, OPSR will use due diligence to procure goods or services, taking into consideration price, availability, quality or expertise and open competition to secure the most reasonable outcome. OPSR is aware of the new procurement thresholds issued by FAR and is taking those into consideration. Should OPSR decide to adopt the higher thresholds, a new policy will be written and sent to the Board for review and approval.

In accordance with the procurement thresholds above which indicate the method of procurement, OPSR has the following authority structure in place. Contracts not provided for in the Board approved budget must be approved by the Board prior to execution. Contracts provided for in the Board approved budget and equal to one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) or less may be executed by the Executive Director without additional approval from the Board. Budgeted contracts exceeding one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000+) must be approved by the Board prior to execution by the Executive Director. The President or Treasurer may sign in the absence of the Executive Director.

All grant agreements exceeding one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) and all gift agreements exceeding one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) must be approved by the Board prior to execution by the Executive Director. The Board shall be made aware of all grants submitted and received, and the nature of the restrictions on such grants. Only the Executive

Director shall have the authority to sign grant agreements. Only the President may sign debt agreements upon Board approval.

Other officers and Committee Chairs do not have the authority to contract on behalf of the Board unless written consent is given after a vote of the Board.

### **Performance and financial monitoring and reporting**

Under the past PDG B-5 grant, OPSR collected all data and prepared the reporting for OKDHS who then approved and submitted. OPSR's program management team will be compiling all financial and performance data which is then reviewed by the executive leadership team. Once approved, the Chief Financial Officer will act as the authorizing agent, submitting reports on behalf of OPSR and their partner entities.

### **Subrecipient monitoring and management.**

OPSR has a robust subrecipient monitoring program in place and has successfully managed fifty (50) subrecipients under past PDG grant award.

To maintain oversight of our subrecipients, the first procedure is to ensure that all subrecipients have been assigned a UEI number which we check in SAM.gov for exclusions. Subrecipients are then required to complete a risk assessment questionnaire, which we evaluate to determine risk level, then assign one of three monitoring protocols. Regardless of risk level, appropriate supporting documentation is required with every draw request and reviewed by our accounting team, prior to payment being issued. Site visits and virtual check-ins are conducted regularly with the frequency outlined in the risk level monitoring protocols, or more frequently as needed.

We ensure that our subrecipients have reviewed and understand their responsibilities under 2 C.F.R. 200 and offer training for those who need additional support. In conjunction with a consulting firm that specializes in grants management, we have developed several tip sheets prepared for subrecipients to educate them on Uniform Guidance.

Each subrecipient will have an approved budget that is tracked against actual spending. OPSR will collect and review single audits from subrecipients when applicable. Findings will be addressed with a corrective action plan(s) and timeline for completion.

### **Record retention and access**

In general, OPSR retains all documents related to federal or state grants for seven (7) years. If there are any ongoing or potential litigations, investigations, audits or other such events, records will be preserved until completion.

### **Remedies for noncompliance**

Any expenditures paid under a federal grant that are later deemed unallowable, will be subject to a remediation or corrective action plan, which may include repayment of funds. Any returned funds will be allocated back to the respective grant; in the event that collection occurs after the period of performance, collected funds will be returned to issuing federal agency, per the instructions or guidance provided.

### **Prior written approval**

OPSR has a multi-level approach for approvals regarding grant management and internal operating procedures. Because of their experience with PDG B-5 grants, staff members are

aware of what decisions and changes need prior written approval by the program officer. OPSR will implement the same protocol with lower-tier partners so that all parties are aware of any decisions or changes that require prior written approval before implementation.

### **Framework for Proper Oversight**

OPSR's Financial Management Manual outlines all policies and procedures. Policies and procedures are reviewed annually, and suggested changes are presented to the Board for approval. All financial management policies and internal controls are aligned with Uniform Guidance and industry best practices.

OPSR has multi-layered review and approval processes in place for both internal financial management and external management of subrecipients. Supporting documents are required for all draw requests and are reviewed 100% prior to payment. Ongoing monitoring efforts include regular check-ins on milestones or performance as well as financial matters. OPSR will require subrecipients to provide a copy of any completed audits, single or otherwise, on an annual basis.

### **Key Staff, Partners, and Subrecipients**

#### **Stephanie Lippert, MSW**

#### **Interim Executive Director, Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness (OPSR)**

Stephanie Lippert, MSW, serves as the Interim Executive Director of the Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness, providing strategic leadership and organizational oversight for all OPSR

initiatives. She brings 22 years of experience in early childhood systems, state-level collaboration, ECE workforce support, and policy development and advocacy.

In her role on the PDG B-5 project, Ms. Lippert will provide executive oversight, ensuring alignment with statewide early childhood priorities, supporting high-level decision-making, and facilitating collaboration and communication across state agencies, funders, and elected officials. She also maintains authority over budget approval, compliance, and submission of all required federal reports.

### **Daphne Peschl**

#### **Chief Financial Officer, Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness (OPSR)**

Daphne Peschl is OPSR's Chief Financial Officer, responsible for financial management, accounting operations, grants administration, and fiscal compliance across all state and federally funded initiatives. She brings 13 years of experience in nonprofit financial systems, including budgeting, procurement, contracts management, and audit coordination.

For PDG B-5, Ms. Peschl will oversee fiscal stewardship of the grant, ensuring allowable use of funds, maintaining accurate financial documentation and records, and ensuring compliance with federal and state requirements. She has authority over financial reporting, fiscal monitoring processes, and supports long-term sustainability planning through financial analysis and forecasting.

### **Allison Loeffler, MSW**

#### **Director of Early Childhood Systems, Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness (OPSR)**

Allison Loeffler, MSW, serves as OPSR's Director of Early Childhood Systems, leading efforts

to strengthen and align Oklahoma’s early childhood care and education system. She brings 22 years of expertise in early childhood systems-building at the state and local level, needs assessment and evaluation, and early childhood evidence-based practices.

Within PDG B-5, Ms. Loeffler will provide strategic and program leadership, overseeing implementation of grant activities, guiding project workflows, and ensuring alignment with the state’s early childhood strategic plan. She will support data-driven decision-making, evaluation, and ensure that needs assessment findings inform system priorities and continuous quality improvement.

#### **Oklahoma Department of Human Services (OKDHS)**

OKDHS is a core PDG B-5 implementation partner and will lead development of the Early Childhood Integrated Portal. Through Child Care Services (licensing, CCDF, workforce, subsidies) and Child Welfare Services (foster care and supports for children in out-of-home placement), OKDHS anchors system access, quality, and regulatory coordination. Their statewide reach and oversight of major funding streams make them essential to sustainable B-5 system improvement.

#### **Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE)**

OSDE leads Oklahoma’s Pre-K and Kindergarten system and is a key partner for early literacy, Science of Reading implementation, and statewide DPIL expansion. OSDE also oversees the transition from Part C to Part B/619, ensuring continuity for children with disabilities. Their partnership strengthens alignment between early childhood programs and the K-12 system and advances unified literacy and transition strategies across agencies.

### **Oklahoma Department of Commerce (ODOC)**

ODOC administers federal Head Start funds for Oklahoma and contracts with Head Start grantees and the HSCO. Their fiscal oversight, contracting, and data coordination ensure Head Start requirements, monitoring, and priorities are aligned within the broader PDG B-5 system. ODOC plays a key role in integrating Head Start into governance, planning, and access efforts.

### **Oklahoma Commission on Children and Youth (OCCY)**

OCCY strengthens cross-system coordination and is the state's lead partner for authentic family voice. Through its Parent Partnership Board and use of Strengthening Families Framework and Parent Cafes, OCCY equips agencies to engage families meaningfully and incorporate lived experience into decision-making. Their leadership in the current PDG cycle - particularly in family engagement and community feedback - continues in the new award.

### **University of Oklahoma – Oklahoma Center for Education Policy (OCEP)**

The Oklahoma Center for Education Policy (OCEP) at the University of Oklahoma will serve as the PDG B-5 evaluation partner for this award, providing research and evaluation, data analysis, and continuous improvement support. OCEP conducts evaluation of system-level strategies, gathers stakeholder and family feedback, and analyzes outcomes to inform decision-making across agencies. Their expertise ensures that PDG implementation is anchored in ongoing learning across the ECE system.

### **Price Lang Public Relations**

Price Lang leads OPSR's B-5 communications and public awareness, producing accessible, coordinated messaging for families, providers, and statewide partners. With deep knowledge of



OPSR's SAC role and early childhood systems, they develop campaigns, resources, and outreach strategies and have a proven ability to implement quickly and effectively.

### **Jill Geiger Consulting (JGC)**

JGC provides essential grant compliance and fiscal accountability support for PDG B-5. JGC strengthens OPSR's policies, procedures, and internal capacity for federal grant management, ensuring the project meets all federal requirements. Their partnership supports strong monitoring, project management, and long-term sustainability of OPSR's grants management systems.

### **Head Start Collaboration Office (HSCO)**

The HSCO ensures coordination between Head Start/Early Head Start grantees and statewide systems. They support alignment of policies, data, workforce initiatives, transitions, and family engagement efforts, ensuring Head Start perspectives and requirements are fully integrated into PDG B-5 planning and implementation.

### **Tulsa Educare**

Tulsa Educare, part of the national Educare Learning Network, contributes expertise in high-quality, research-based early learning and comprehensive family supports. Their experience with vulnerable families, trauma-informed practice, and embedded professional development strengthens system efforts related to quality, workforce, and two-generation strategies.

### **Sunbeam Family Services**

Sunbeam provides Early Head Start and Head Start services in central Oklahoma and is a leader in infant and early childhood mental health, trauma-informed care, and family strengthening.

Their operational knowledge and community partnerships support system initiatives on access, quality, and comprehensive family supports.

### **CAP Tulsa**

CAP Tulsa is one of the largest and most innovative EHS/HS grantees in the nation, integrating high-quality early learning with two-generation family economic mobility supports. Their strengths in data-driven improvement, family engagement, and cross-sector partnerships significantly inform PDG statewide quality strategies.

### **Oklahoma Family Network (OFN)**

OFN offers family-to-family support and leadership organization, elevating the voices of families of children with special health care needs or disabilities. They provide parent leadership development, advocacy, and peer support, ensuring families navigating complex systems shape planning and decision-making.

### **Lilyfield**

Lilyfield brings expertise in foster care, adoption, and family strengthening, ensuring the perspectives of foster, adoptive, and kinship caregivers inform ECE systems work. Through Parent Cafés and Strengthening Families Framework, they elevate parent voice and support system improvements for families interacting with child welfare and early learning programs.

### **Project sustainability plan**

Oklahoma's PDG B - 5 strategies are intentionally designed to create long-term, durable system capacity that remains in place well beyond the one-year grant period. Because the Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness (OPSR) serves as the state's legislatively mandated State

Advisory Council (SAC) under the *Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness Act* (10 O.S. § 640–645), all PDG activities are embedded within permanent governance, statutory responsibilities, and ongoing statewide initiatives. This ensures that PDG-funded work does not operate as a short-term project but as an accelerator of Oklahoma’s long-standing early childhood priorities.

#### *Embedded in Permanent State Governance and Statutory Authority*

OPSR’s role as SAC is codified in Oklahoma statute, which requires the Council to conduct the state’s Needs Assessment, oversee the Statewide Strategic Plan, coordinate early childhood partners, and advise state agencies on early learning policy. The OPSR Board structure, defined by statute, ensures ongoing representation from OKDHS, OSDE, OSDH, Tribal Nations, Head Start, child care, and families. This permanent governance structure guarantees that PDG initiatives such as the Transitions Framework, statewide active supervision alignment, cross-agency financing strategies, and early literacy coordination continue under OPSR’s statutory mandate, not dependent on federal grant cycles.

#### *Alignment with Ongoing State Investments and Legislative Priorities*

Oklahoma has made significant state-level investments that sustain PDG-supported work:

- Strong Start, authorized by the Legislature in 2022 and expanded in 2024, is now a permanent statewide workforce benefit administered jointly by OKDHS and OPSR. Because Strong Start is embedded in statute and state budgets, PDG’s workforce alignment and coaching supports are integrated into a program with long-term sustainability.

- The Strong Readers Act (Reading Sufficiency Act modernization) requires evidence-based early literacy instruction, prohibits three-cueing statewide beginning in 2025–26, and funds professional learning for educators. PDG literacy alignment (DPIL expansion, cross-system literacy toolkits, Pre-K coaching) strengthens implementation of this long-term Oklahoma policy priority.
- The OKDHS services portal, supported through the agency’s commitment to benefits modernization, continues beyond the PDG period. PDG-supported design, alignment, and usability work for the Early Childhood Portal will remain part of this multi-year transformation effort.
- Oklahoma’s School Readiness Pathway, adopted by the SAC and used by multiple agencies for monitoring and planning, ensures that PDG-supported indicator refreshes and dashboards remain part of statewide accountability systems.

#### *Long-Term Workforce and Provider Infrastructure*

PDG investments expand Oklahoma’s durable early childhood workforce and business infrastructure:

- The CCR&R system, supported by state funds and embedded in OKDHS Child Care Services operations, will continue delivering business coaching, quality improvement, and technical assistance after the grant period.
- The PDG-supported Business Support & Sustainability Academy builds provider financial resilience through training, cost modeling, and sustainable business practices that remain valuable beyond PDG.

- Strong Start and PDG-aligned workforce retention pilots generate tools, templates, and coaching approaches that OKDHS and CCR&R can sustain through braided state and federal funds long after PDG ends.

#### *Sustainable Data Systems and Analytics Capacity*

OPSR's statutory responsibility to publish the annual School Readiness Report, maintain statewide indicators, and coordinate data integration ensures that data modernization efforts funded through PDG (such as the updated ECIDS plan, refreshed Birth - Five indicators, and new dashboards) become permanent system products. Once developed, these tools will be maintained through existing data-sharing agreements with OKDHS, OSDH, OSDE, and Tribal partners as part of ongoing governance structures - not dependent on federal PDG dollars.

#### *Permanently Established Family Engagement Structures*

The Oklahoma Commission on Children and Youth (OCCY), a SAC member, is statutorily mandated to operate the Parent Partnership Board and parent leadership structures that inform all child-serving agencies. By embedding PDG activities (e.g., navigation tools, transition supports, literacy engagement) within OCCY's permanent family engagement system, Oklahoma ensures that family voice continues to shape PDG priorities long after the one-year award period concludes.

Since Oklahoma's early childhood governance, workforce initiatives, literacy reforms, and family engagement systems are grounded in state statute, long-term agency initiatives, and legislative commitments, the strategies proposed under PDG B-5 will generate lasting improvements that continue beyond the grant period. PDG funding accelerates work that

Oklahoma is already committed to sustaining, ensuring that federal investments drive lasting, statewide system change rather than temporary improvements.

#### Line Item Budget and Budget Narrative

OPSR requests funding to support the implementation of the PDG B-5 Building Grant, described previously. Total federal funds in the amount of \$15,000,000 are requested: \$3,051,865.25 in Base/Operating for recipient OPSR, \$8,348,134.75 for subrecipient OKDHS, and \$3,600,000 in subcontracts. OPSR's total non-federal share contribution is \$4,500,000 which equals 30% match requirement of \$15,000,000. Sub-totals throughout the justification that follows may reflect a \$1 to \$5 variance from line items due to accumulated rounding.

#### *Annual PDG B-5 Operating Budget*

Table 1 summarizes OPSR's PDG B-5 12-month, year-one annual operating budget. Total federal request includes recipient OPSR's base operating and subrecipient OKDHS's base operating funds. It reflects the non-federal share contributions by object class category which will also be shown in associated detail.

Table 1. PDG 12-Month, Year-One Annual PDG B-5 Operating Budget

Cost Category	Federal Request (OPSR)	Non-Federal Share (NFS)
Personnel	\$553,299	\$0
Fringe	\$121,726	\$0
Travel	\$9,500	\$0
Equipment	\$0	\$0
Supplies	\$660,000	\$0
Contractual	\$11,708,743	\$4,500,000
Construction	\$0	\$0
Other	\$1,287,554	\$0
Indirect	\$659,178	\$0
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$15,000,000</b>	<b>\$4,500,000</b>

The justification for the 12-month, year-one PDG B-5 budget is as follows:

**Personnel justification:** OPSR requests \$553,299.48 for personnel. This includes 11 current staff members totaling 6.15 FTEs. No new positions will need to be hired for PDG B-5. OPSR's Executive Director left as of 11/30/2025; however, the OPSR Foundation Board is actively interviewing for this position and plans to have it filled by early 2026.

**Fringe justification:** Robust benefits support staff retention. OPSR requests \$121,725.70 in base operating funds for fringe (Table 2). OPSR has a fringe rate of 22%.

Table 2. PDG Fringe Benefits

<i>OPSR Fringe 22% of \$553,298.75 in base.</i>		
OPSR: Retirement	3%	\$16,598.96
OPSR: FICA	6%	\$33,197.92
OPSR: Medicare	2%	\$11,065.96
OPSR: Workers Compensation	3%	\$16,598.96
OPSR: Insurance	8%	\$44,263.90
<b>OPSR – Total Fringe</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>\$121,725.70</b>

**Travel justification:** As indicated in the NOFO, OPSR requests funds to support out-of-town travel to Washington DC for the PDG conference. The total Travel request is \$9,500. OPSR requires at least \$9,196 to send four people. Each (4) traveler will require airfare (\$750), four nights at a hotel (\$276/night), four per diem (\$69/day), and a local travel/incidental allowance of \$100.

**Equipment justification:** No equipment funds are requested.

**Supplies justification:** OPSR requests \$660,000 in supplies funds. \$10,000 per staff member (6.15 FTE) for technology (hardware and software), office expenses, and supplies. Resources include educational materials for Quarterly Academies for ECE (\$500 x 300 ECE providers x 4 quarters).

Table 3. PDG Supplies Expenses

<b>Supplies Category: Description</b>	<b>Base / Annual Operating OPSR (recipient)</b>
<i>Office Supplies:</i> OPSR requests office supplies (technology, desks, office expenses and supplies) 6 staff @ \$10,000.	\$60,000
<i>Supplies for Quarterly Academies:</i> OPSR will provide up to \$500 in educational materials for 300 ECE participants quarterly.	\$600,000
<b>OPSR - Total Supplies</b>	<b>\$660,000</b>

**Contractual justification:** OPSR will contract with service providers throughout Oklahoma to support implementation of the PDG project. Base operating funds in the amount of \$11,708,742.85 are requested for contractual items (Table 4). OPSR will subaward the following:

*OKDHS*, \$8,108,743 - to conduct a feasibility study and implement Portal Project II  
*OCCY*, \$125,000 - Parent engagement  
*Sunbeam*, \$200,000 - Head Start Transition Family Advocates  
*Tulsa Educare*, \$200,000 - Head Start Transition Family Advocates  
*CAP Tulsa*, \$200,000 - Head Start Transition Family Advocates  
*Head Start Collaboration Office*, \$75,000 - Transition Summit and website / communications revamp  
*Lilyfield*, \$75,000 - Child Welfare and Foster Care, Parent Voice  
*Oklahoma Family Network*, \$75,000 - for Parent Voice

OPSR will procure the following:

*OU ETeam*, \$150,000 – needs assessment and indicator refresh  
*Oklahoma Center for Education Policy*, \$500,000 – ECIDS updates and grant evaluation  
*Jill Geiger Consulting LLC*, \$250,000 – compliance and finance support  
*Price Lang Public Relations*, \$1,500,000 – strategic communications  
*Oklahoma Center for Non Profits*, \$250,000 – professional development for ECE

Table 4. PDG Contractual Expenses

<b>Contractual Expense: Description</b>	<b>Base / Annual Operating OPSR (recipient)</b>
Contract: OKDHS, Feasibility Study and Portal Project II	\$8,108,743
Contract: OCCY, Parent Engagement	\$125,000
Contract: Sunbeam, Head Start Transition Family Advocates	\$200,000
Contract: Tulsa Educare, Head Start Transition Family Advocates	\$200,000
Contract: CAP Tulsa, Head Start Transition Family Advocates	\$200,000
Contract: OU Eteam, indicator support, cat 1, data and needs assessment, evaluation support	\$150,000
Contract: Oklahoma Center for Education Policy (OCEP)	\$500,000
Contract: Jill Geiger Consulting LLC	\$250,000
Contract: Price Lang Public Relations	\$1,500,000



Contract: Head Start Collaboration	\$75,000
Contract: Lilyfield	\$75,000
Contract: Oklahoma Center for Non-Profit	\$250,000
Contract: Oklahoma Family Network	\$75,000
<b>OPSR - Total Contractual</b>	<b>\$11,689,767.85</b>

**Other justification:** As detailed in Table 5, OPSR requests \$1,287,554 in base operating funds for Other expenses.

Table 5. Other Expenses

<b>Other Expense:</b> Description	Base / Annual Operating OPSR (recipient)
<i>OPSR Rent:</i> Based on historical costs. \$3,129.50 * 12 months	\$37,554
<i>OPSR Other:</i> Oklahoma Strong Start program – marketing for open positions & retention incentives for ECE teachers	\$1,000,000
<i>OPSR Other:</i> Professional Development across ECE systems	\$250,000
<b>OPSR - Total Other Expense</b>	<b>\$1,287,554</b>

**Indirect justification:** OPSR will apply the de minimis rate of 15% to the applicable budget lines in the federal request \$4,394,524.48 in the amount of \$659,178.67.

**Non-Federal Match:** OPSR's NFS plan includes \$4,500,000 in contributions to the PDG effort in non-federal funds. (Table BJ-7).

Table 6. HS Non-Federal Share Budget Summary

<b>Partner</b>	<b>Description/Source</b>	<b>Total NFS</b>
Commerce	The Oklahoma Department of Commerce is the entity for state appropriations to manage the Head Start Program. This amount of State Appropriations is committed to be matched with federal funds for this grant.	\$2,185,265
OSDE- DPIL	The Oklahoma State Department of Education is the entity for state appropriations to manage the Dolly Parton Imagination Library program. This amount of State Appropriations is committed to be matched with federal funds for this grant.	\$250,000
Oklahoma Strong Start	OPSR manages the Strong Start Program, which will be funded via State Appropriations during the period of performance for PDG B-5 grant. This amount of State Appropriations is committed to be matched with federal funds for this grant.	\$250,000
OKDHS	The Oklahoma Department of Human Services commits this amount of State Appropriations to be matched with federal funds for this grant.	\$1,814,735
<b>Total Non-Federal Share Budget Summary</b>		<b>\$4,500,000</b>