

May 2019 Director's Report

WIIN Grant

The Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation Act or "WIIN Act" of 2016 authorizes the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to award grants to states and tribes to assist local and tribal educational agencies in voluntary testing for lead in drinking water at schools and child care programs. The grant program is designed to reduce exposure of children, who are most vulnerable, to lead in drinking water at schools and child care facilities, utilizing the EPA's 3Ts for Reducing Lead in Drinking Water in Schools guidance, or equivalent state program.

The Early Learning Division and Oregon Department of Education submitted a letter of intent requesting funds to be used jointly to mitigate the costs of lead testing as well as provide additional supports to any child care providers who speak a primary language other than English. On April 29, 2019 we were notified that Oregon received an allotment of \$1,102,000 for FY 2018 and FY 2019. This summer, we should receive an implementation document, including criteria and a sample workplan, before grant applications are opened at the end of the summer.

Legislative Session

The governor signed the Student Success Act, which dedicates new revenue – estimated at \$2 billion – to education. Beginning in 2020, this new revenue will support landmark improvements to Oregon's education system, including dedicating at least 20 percent of funding from new revenue to early learning programs in Oregon. This means ELD is responsible for administering \$400 million in new investments for early learning programs in Oregon. I am incredibly excited and proud about what this means for thousands of Oregon's young children and their families! We have the ability to build on our work and truly transform the lives of children. Here is what the funding will provide for new early learning investments:

- We'll be able to serve about 6,000 more children birth-to-five in high-quality early care and education by adding:
 - 1,200 slots for infants and toddlers in Early Head Start
 - 4,600 high quality preschool slots between Preschool Promise and Oregon Prekindergarten
- A new Equity Fund will allow us to partner with culturally-specific organizations to deliver early learning programming and reach families with young children who have been historically underserved.
- We have an opportunity to redesign and resource a professional learning system for birth to five educators. This work includes a partnership with the Higher Education Coordinating Commission to create a scholarship program for early educators.
- New investments in critical family support programs will support Healthy Families Oregon, Relief Nurseries, and parenting education.
- Additional resources for the Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education program administered by ODE will provide new opportunities for us to align our work and ensure children with developmental delays and disabilities receive services.
- Additional ELD staff to carry out this work, as well as additional resources for Hubs and CCR&Rs.

This funding is in addition to our 2019-21 Legislatively Approved Budget, which is still being developed by the legislature. We have a number of priority positions and investments, especially in child care, that we presented to the Ways and Means Education Subcommittee last week.

Hiring and Recruitment Updates

The past couple of months we have been fortunate to fill key positions.

Jay Messenger is our new Legal Enforcement Director. He comes to us with experience in the regulatory field from his work with the Department of Enforcement of the National Securities Dealers. Jay is also an educator and has taught legal

writing and developed programs to support law students at Willamette University.

Through that teaching experience he went on to earn an Education Leadership and Policy Master's degree at Portland State University along with his Juris Doctor from Temple University School of Law. Most recently, he served as the Chief of Staff and Senior Advisor to a California State Assembly member managing both the work in the California legislator and managing the Assembly member's campaign.

Angela Rodriguez has joined the team at the Early Learning Division as the Quality Assurance Manager. In this role, she will support the work of the entire ELD, beginning with identifying key metrics and outcomes associated with OCC's work and helping transform our work around continuous quality improvement across all programs. She will lead a small team who will work with her in developing metrics and CQI processes. We are lucky to benefit from Angela's decision to return home to Silverton, Oregon after spending a significant amount of time in New York City, most recently as the Director of Quality and Outcomes at the Children's Aid Society. Angela has been supporting the Division's work to improve our Child Care Safety Portal in a temporary position and will continue this critical work as part of her role, including staffing the Early Learning Council's ad-hoc committee for the Portal.

Tami Scott has accepted the position as the Office of Child Care Field Operations Director. This position will lead the work of the Early Learning Division on child care licensing closely with the Director of Child Care, the Regional Managers, and the Legal and Enforcement Director. Tami brings 19 years of experience in child care regulations and has led several significant reforms.

Anne Morrison has transitioned to the role of Preschool Development Grant B-5 Manager. As the PDG Manager, Anne will lead the work to implement the exciting opportunities that the Grant offers our state. Anne leads key programmatic activities of the grant, including serving as the ELD's lead on a critical Strength and Needs Assessment, conducted by Portland State University, which will help us understand the broad early learning needs of historically underserved children and families communities across the state. You can read more about the PDG work here. Anne will bring the strengths she demonstrated as our Rules Coordinator, a role to which she brought a wealth of policy knowledge, a passion for community voice, and a strong organizational and project management skillset. We are excited for this new opportunity for Anne, and grateful that she remains a part of the child care rulemaking process in this transition period.

I also wanted to let you know that we are hiring for some key roles within the Division, including backfilling Anne's former role as Rules Coordinator and expanding the scope of the role to include the duties of the Early Learning Council Administrator. We are also hiring a Portland Regional Child Care Manager, a Child Care Compliance Specialist 2 in Gresham, and a Child Care Compliance Manager.