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MSDE Awards More Than \$23 Million to Lay the Groundwork to Bolster and Expand Maryland's Early Childhood Education and Childcare Communities

23 Programs Awarded Funding Through Maryland Rebuilds Grant Program to Address the Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Childcare, Early Childhood Education, and School Readiness

BALTIMORE (April 12, 2023) – The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) announced today the award recipients of the Maryland Rebuilds Grant Program, a special, one-time program designed to strengthen, expand, and enhance early childhood education by utilizing federal funds and mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. In total, MSDE is awarding more than \$23 million in funding to non-profit organizations, institutions of higher education, local education agencies, private childcare providers, and public prekindergarten programs to help support the state's childcare community.

Maryland Rebuilds is centered around six high-leverage strategies identified in partnership with Maryland's childcare community and designed to transform early childhood systems in Maryland: Expanding Access to Quality Childcare; Early Learning Models of Excellence; Expanding Mental Health Supports and Services; Growing a Highly Effective Childcare Workforce; Boosting Family Childcare; and Advancing a Coordinated Prekindergarten Enrollment System.

Research shows the early years are the most critical time in brain development. Maryland Rebuilds is a forward-looking grant initiative that envisions a childcare system that works for all children, families, childcare providers, and educators, especially those that have been historically underserved. The pandemic has made clear that our childcare programs, early childhood educators, families, and young children need greater support. Ambitious and innovative efforts, like those amongst the Maryland Rebuilds awardees are necessary to elevate the early childhood education profession to build a strong educational foundation and realize the vision for learning set by the Blueprint for Maryland's Future.

“One-time pandemic funds are just that, one time. Maryland needs more than one-time programming and the Maryland Rebuilds grantees all offer pathways to sustainable and scalable long-term programming,” said State Superintendent of Schools Mohammed Choudhury. “With these investments, the Maryland Rebuilds Program will foster an expanded childcare ecosystem rich with high-quality childcare exemplars that can serve as learning labs for our childcare community, new and expanded pathways to the early childhood profession, and the provision of essential and much-needed comprehensive mental health and support services. The pandemic is not the cause of Maryland’s deep need for investment in our youngest children, but it did exacerbate the problem. Maryland Rebuilds goes at the root of the problem with its focus on childcare infrastructure now and in the long-term. With these strategies in place, Maryland Rebuilds awardees are preparing to lead the way in meeting the demands of modern childcare and early childhood education systems with innovative ideas, resources, and programming.”

MSDE is eager to support the implementation of approved grant programs to ensure success of these investments and to identify opportunities to capture and scale successful programs that meet their specific, targeted goals and demonstrate measurable progress.

For example, Tip Top Tots Early Learning Center (TTT), an early childhood education apprenticeship program, was awarded \$3 million for the Growing a Highly Effective Childcare Workforce Strategy. TTT will use Maryland Rebuilds funding to develop a paid apprenticeship program for recruitment and training, emphasizing clinical experience across diverse communities and vulnerable populations.

“With Maryland Rebuilds, LUNA Family Support Services will be able to create licensed childcare slots for underserved families and young children across Maryland,” said Pilar Torres, the Director of Family Childcare Initiatives for LUNA Family Support Services. LUNA Family Support Systems will focus on the Boosting Family Childcare strategy. It will use its \$1,262,745 award to create new high-quality childcare seats in childcare deserts that will support working families. “Hand-in-hand with our community partner, we will offer our award-winning model, ESCALERAS, an incubator that supports Latina family childcare providers. Our educator-entrepreneurs will open new programs that support our state's labor and tax base. More importantly, these quality providers will ensure the optimal development of our youngest children, narrowing equity gaps that strengthen our state's educational future and competitiveness.”

The Maryland Rebuilds Grant Program period is from December 1, 2022, to June 30, 2024. For more information about Maryland Rebuilds or a complete list of award recipients, visit: <https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/MDRebuilds>.

Learn more about awarded programs below and follow MSDE social media to track progress updates throughout the grant period.

Maryland Rebuilds Grant Program Award Recipients:

Recipient: Abilities Network, Inc.

High-Leverage Strategy: Boosting Family Childcare

Award: \$586,466

Description: To address the need for more robust support for new family childcare businesses in Central Maryland North, including Baltimore, Harford, and Cecil counties.

Recipient: Chesapeake College

High-Leverage Strategy: Growing a Highly Effective Childcare Workforce

Award: \$1,049,813

Description: To design and operate a 12-month paid apprenticeship program for aspiring early childhood educators.

Recipient: Critchlow Adkins Children's Center

High-Leverage Strategy: Early Learning Models of Excellence

Award: \$290,613

Description: To provide opportunities for childcare providers to learn best practices and participate in the Maryland EXCELS program.

Recipient: Echelon Academy

High-Leverage Strategy: Growing a Highly Effective Childcare Workforce

Award: \$2,944,000

Description: To leverage its experience in developing and managing other training and experiential learning programs to create a new paid apprenticeship program.

Recipient: Focus on Children

High-Leverage Strategy: Boosting Family Childcare

Award: \$517,708

Description: To improve professional development opportunities for family childcare professionals by offering a comprehensive structure-learning-format approach that helps family childcare professionals gain national credentials and introduces them to Maryland Excels and the Maryland Family Engagement Program.

Recipient: Higher Ground Education

High-Leverage Strategy: Growing a Highly Effective Childcare Workforce

Award: \$1,120,544

Description: To ensure students who enter the training program spend approximately two years earning a MSDE-recognized credential in early childhood education while working full-time in a classroom.

Recipient: Howard County Community College

High-Leverage Strategy: Growing a Highly Effective Childcare Workforce

Award: \$2,095,242

Description: To increase the number of family childcare programs in identified childcare deserts.

Recipient: Howard County Office of Children and Families

High-Leverage Strategy: Boosting Family Childcare

Award: \$525,000

Description: To increase developing incubator systems to support individuals who want to start new childcare businesses and provide support to pre-existing childcare businesses looking to expand their reach and increase their services.

Recipient: Johns Hopkins Institute for Innovation in Development, Engagement, and Learning Systems

High-Leverage Strategy: Expanding Mental Health Supports and Services Strategy

Award: \$683,254

Description: To implement developmentally appropriate practices that address the social and emotional needs of children and families.

Recipient: Kennedy Krieger

High-Leverage Strategy: Early Learning Models of Excellence

Award: \$399,948

Description: To offer observations and professional and resource development in order to strengthen children's preparation for kindergarten.

Recipient: Lucy School

High-Leverage Strategy: Early Learning Models of Excellence

Award: \$307,050

Description: To develop a high-quality, evidence and arts-based, content-rich and culturally relevant curriculum for early literacy.

Recipient: LUNA Family Support Services

High-Leverage Strategy: Boosting Family Childcare

Award: \$1,262,745

Description: To develop a partnership with the Prince George's County Child Care Resource and Referral network to create new high-quality childcare slots in childcare deserts that will support working families.

Recipient: Maryland Family Network

High-Leverage Strategy: Growing a Highly Effective Childcare Workforce

Award: \$565,975

Description: To create a training curriculum and coaching model that enables ongoing professional development for early childhood educators to establish a highly effective childcare workforce.

Recipient: Montgomery College

High-Leverage Strategy: Growing a Highly Effective Childcare Workforce

Award: \$1,531,837

Description: To eliminate barriers in the Early Childhood Education Alternative Certification Program by piloting innovative alternative certification programs specifically tailored to non-public nursery schools.

Recipient: Notre Dame University of Maryland

High-Leverage Strategy: Growing a Highly Effective Childcare Workforce

Award: \$932,767

Description: To expand the scope of current resources and offer a natural continuation for education by developing specialized coursework that implements a series of practical trainings and professional development opportunities for caregivers, teachers, and childcare providers and establishes an alternative early childhood education teacher prep program.

Recipient: Salisbury University

High-Leverage Strategy: Growing a Highly Effective Childcare Workforce

Award: \$2,487,943

Description: To expand career options and offer opportunities for paraprofessionals and childcare providers to earn their bachelor's degree and early childhood teaching license.

Recipient: The Parents' Place Maryland

High-Leverage Strategy: Expanding Access to Quality Childcare

Award: \$760,269

Description: To create four early childhood technical assistance centers with nine early childhood family partners for six of Maryland's counties, including Washington, Allegany, Prince George, Somerset, Dorchester, Wicomico, and Baltimore City.

Recipient: Tip Top Tots Early Learning Center

High-Leverage Strategy: Growing a Highly Effective Childcare Workforce Strategy

Award: \$3,000,000

Description: To develop a paid apprenticeship program aimed at recruitment and training with an emphasis on gaining clinical experience across diverse communities and vulnerable populations.

Recipient: Towson University

High-Leverage Strategy: Growing a Highly Effective Childcare Workforce

Award: \$1,126,027

Description: To use Creating Accessible Degree Pathways to strengthen the early childhood workforce in multiple evidence-based ways such as engaging with job residency placements, internships, and online coursework.

Recipient: Towson University

High-Leverage Strategy: Early Learning Models of Excellence

Award: \$180,915

Description: To create a model center for excellence in childcare at the Towson University Child Care Center, emphasizing social and emotional learning and reducing exclusionary practices.

Recipient: University of Maryland

High-Leverage Strategy: Growing a Highly Effective Childcare Workforce

Award: \$2,900,221

Description: To support childcare candidates earning preschool credentials while also participating in paid apprenticeships in early childhood centers with an emphasis on underrepresented groups entering the early childhood, childcare, and special education workforce pipeline.

Recipient: Worcester County Public Schools

High-Leverage Strategy: Growing a Highly Effective Childcare Workforce

Award: \$1,281,375

Description: To develop a pipeline for the childcare workforce through an early childhood apprenticeship program and creating a childcare facility at Worcester Technical High School.

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