

**ECEAP Contracting Work Group
December 4, 2017 Meeting Summary**

- I. **DEL Updates** – Kelli Bohanon shared updates of developments at DEL that might influence the ECEAP expansion. These include:
- A. **Upcoming RFA Process**
 1. DEL surveyed current contractors about the capacity to take on more ECEAP slots. Contractors indicated they could provide an additional 1,800 slots.
 2. DEL will publicize the upcoming RFA process broadly to attract additional providers
 3. The RFA is expected to be released sometime this winter [Note: It has subsequently been posted to <https://del.wa.gov/eceap>]
 - B. **Child Care Pathways**
 1. The Indian Policy Early Learning (IPEL) committee has agreed to work with DEL to develop a Tribal Readiness Pathway.
 - C. **Update on Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF)**
 1. The focus to date has been on needed infrastructure changes.
 2. DCYF is now focusing on shaping the mission for the new department. Secretary Hunter is engaging DEL, Children’s Administration and Juvenile Justice staff in shaping this mission, and asking for public input from across the state.
 3. Kelli noted that the new department was not established as a cost saving measure.
 4. Garrison noted that DEL, DSHS, and DJR staff met in in Yakima on 12/01/17 to talk about the pros and cons of different regional organization models that already exist within the three agencies. The conversation culminated with suggestions that nine regions mirroring ESDs, or 10 (with 101 or PSESD split due to size), or six regions (potentially “nested” within a 9 or ten region structure).
- II. **Regional Role Supporting ECEAP Expansion** – Garrison reminded members that we have spent time delineating functions that would best be focused at the state, regional and local levels. As part of that conversation, we have identified capacities that should be “required” at each level and functions that some regional entity might need to play to allow expansion to happen effectively. We’ve also talked about the challenges of serving children who may be dispersed across a broad region, making a traditional model difficult. To focus on questions related to these topics, we divided into three groups to explore questions “world café” style. Work Group ideas are noted grouped by questions below.
- A. **Required Contractor and Subcontractor Capacities** – Discussion focused around the capacity of contractors and subcontractors to meet the needs of children within their programs.
 - 1.) *How should the capacities of contractors/subcontractors be assessed?*
 - a. There needs to be an assessment checklist or readiness checklist
 - b. All contractors should have an assessment of their start-up needs with clarity on what “weighted” issues are critical to have in place before services are offered.
 - 2.) *What should training and corrective action look like?*
 - a. There needs to be a balance of what the contractor/subcontractor wants vs what the needs of the program are (e.g., a contractor might want more funding for transportation support but community needs have pointed to a need for more slots).
 - b. Consistent statewide basic training and supports to prepare new subcontractors, then provide ongoing support with flexibility to “meet them where they are” as they improve; Intense DEL monitoring after issues are addressed.

- c. There were varied views regarding how long contractors/subcontractors should be allowed to take corrective action. 1 year to 3 years were discussed as outside limits, though there was agreement that time to correct should be related to the importance/severity/complexity of the corrective action items.
- d. Items to be monitored could be weighted (in line with weighted WACs) to prioritize corrective action on safety related issues.
- e. There should be a body/organizational structure to provide “coordinated regional assessment” where compliance violations can be addressed from a neutral perspective (concern that lead contractors might not be able to do that from a neutral position)

3.) *What should be considered if a transition of a contractor to become a subcontractor is deemed necessary?*

- a. We need to identify steps to start the process that follow assessment results.
- b. We need a known timeline.
- c. We need time and attention to attempt to resolve the action items, plan for a change to a subcontractor role, and strengthen the relationship with the potential contractor with which they will subcontract in the future
- d. We need resources from DEL for startup (or for transitions between roles) that would provide “scaffolding” to begin with safety issues, then build on that foundation (weighted WACs are an example of where to start).
- e. One-time funding might be needed to support the transition.

Key questions the group raised for further exploration include

- *How do you ensure that the contractor/subcontractor has sufficient supervision & support? How would you measure those?*
- *Do we need the Standards to require a certain amount of supervision?*
- *How do we measure the ability to hire qualified staff?*

B. Regional Leadership – *How might one or more contractors in a region support enhanced regional functions in concert with DEL?*

1.) Regional Lead

- a. Should the lead position rotate? Both yes and no votes gathered from the world café process with recommendations that it rotate after a certain number of years with additional concern that rotation will cause instability and confusion.
- b. Size is an issue: We need to define the sub-regions with a connection to the number of slots available.
- c. Geography and distance are issues.
- d. We need staff time dedicated to this role, requiring money/funding.
- e. We’ll need to coordinate between B-3 and ECEAP (recruit, enroll, etc.)
- f. Consider a scaffolding approach with DEL providing support to slowly get someone ready for a regional lead role.
- g. Consider how TA plays a role in regional leadership.
- h. Add statewide and regional focus on combined HS/ECEAP recruitment and enrollment.
- i. Add a regional readiness team.

2.) In-Region Coordination

- a. Leverage organizations with capacities and relationship (they could be more nimble and effective).
- b. Be flexible with locally designed options put in place with consultation from DEL.
- c. Assess needs within each region and work to have different organizations, or contractors do things at which they are best.

- d. Varied views on rotating roles.

3.) Other Ideas

- a. How does this fit with the role of early learning regional coalitions?
- b. Perhaps DEL could contract this out for TA and shared services (competitive process).
- c. Consider stationing DEL/ECEAP staff in the regions (lots of support for this).

C. Adaptation at “Entitlement”- What are some ways we can balance the need to do three competing things (sustain, serve, allocate funding) each year once we reach “entitlement”?

1.) Sustain Built Capacity

- a. Commit to a minimum number of slots for contract period.
- b. Create a robust centralized waitlist to ensure slots are filled.
- c. Fund additional increments of administration, CQI, comprehensive services.
- d. Contract for a range of slots.

2.) Serve All Children

- a. Establish a “Pot of slots”.
- b. Overfund for a number of “extra” slots to cover the unforeseen increase in enrollment.
- c. Establish flexible models.
- d. Explore ways to treat rural and necessary schools differently.
- e. Pay enhancements in certain areas to allow contractors to be competitive.
- f. Enhance forecasting methodology and include more factors in funding formula.
- g. Change eligibility to actual age 3 during school year (not by August).
- h. Use net income rather than gross income for eligibility (and/or consider “exempting certain types of income when calculating eligibility).

3.) Equitable Funding Allocation

- a. Differentiate rates by regions (Boo! Says Eastern WA).
- b. Allocate funding based on cost of living.
- c. Provide more flexibility/multifaceted funding (method/formula more fluid; similar to school districts) and dependent on child need
- d. Require in-kind contribution, like Head Start, in order to partner and share resource contribution

III. Funding Pass-Through Guidance – We reviewed the next iteration of *Funding Pass-Through Guidance* to identify the variables that should influence the funding that is passed through to a subcontractor in different situations. We also explored the assumptions that might differ for part-day or extended day models. Work group members were given worksheets to complete that outlined the different assumptions and variations that could impact funding. Charts were completed both individually and in small groups as members of the workgroup preferred. The attached *ECEAP Funding Pass-Through Guidance Comments* reflects specific comments that will inform the next versions of *Funding Pass-Through Guidance*. Some main themes included:

- A.** Variations in the indirect rate that different institutions/organizations can charge.
- B.** Education specialists and ECEAP coaches need to be added to the staffing options.
- C.** There are many variables that impact staff compensation.

IV. Wrap Up and Next Steps – Traditionally, the Contracting Work Group has taken place in the afternoon on the same day as the ECEAP Think Tank meeting due to significant scheduling overlap. The next ECEAP Think Tank meeting is set to take place on the week of January 22nd. Dovetailing will send a Doodle poll to help set the date. If the meetings occur on the same day, the Contracting Work Group would start at 1:30. [Note: As a result of the Doodle poll, 1/22 1:30-4:30 was selected for the next meeting.]