



# Nevada Early Childhood Care and Education Fiscal Feasibility Study

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## Executive Summary

This report was prepared by MetrixIQ for the State of Nevada Department of Education, Office of Early Learning and Development as it considers options for expanding and enhancing early childhood services and programs in the state. As part of the Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five (PDG B-5), this report seeks to support these efforts by:

- 1) Providing a high-level overview of the landscape of early childhood care and availability throughout Nevada;
- 2) Reviewing the strengths and weaknesses of the existing early care system within the state;
- 3) Comparing key data points from four other states to better understand the areas where Nevada is unique and where it is comparable to other states; and
- 4) Developing a cost estimation tool (CET) for understanding what it might cost the state to enhance and expand the childcare market and services in Nevada.

## Data Sources and Methods

Data was curated for the analysis of Nevada's landscape from three primary sources:

- Nevada State Childcare Licensing webpage

- A list of Silver State Star Ratings and provider subsidy participation provided from the Nevada Department of Health and Human Services
- A list of providers from the Childcare Inspections web page

This allowed us to build a comprehensive data set of Nevada's licensed childcare providers, which included a variety of data points, including licensed capacity, geographic coordinates, public use micro area, and county. We also compiled a data set detailing the geographic breakdown of Nevada's population, with particular focus on children under age 5. In conjunction with data analysis, we also conducted interviews with nine different members of the Nevada Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) community in order to gain a more complete understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the state's systems.

While this analysis was being conducted, research and a compilation of facts regarding other states' systems were compiled. Four comparison states were researched: Colorado, Ohio, Oklahoma, and Tennessee. We conducted a wide variety of interviews with stakeholders in those four states in order to build an overview of the Early Childhood Care and Education systems, strengths, and weaknesses in each state.

## Nevada Landscape Findings

MetrixIQ found three particular defining characteristics of Nevada's ECCE system:

- 1) A prevalence of childcare deserts in the state, both in rural and urban areas. Over 70% of Nevada's population lives in a childcare desert, meaning an area with fewer than one childcare slot for every three children under age five.
- 2) Key populations of children remain underserved by the current ECCE system, including students needing mental health and developmental supports (early intervention services), children eligible for childcare subsidy, and children living on tribal lands.
- 3) Provider participation in the state QRIS is fairly low (approximately 40% of licensed providers in the state participate), which means that many are not receiving valuable quality improvement supports and are unable to participate in the state's childcare subsidy program.

## Peer State Findings

Our analysis and research of Colorado, Ohio, Oklahoma, and Tennessee brought forward several proven system elements for consideration as Nevada moves forward:

- 1) The importance of developing strong centralized administrative and data systems
- 2) The need for comprehensive family engagement and communications campaigns to accompany new or enhanced program roll-out
- 3) The efficacy of building deep public *and* private support for ECCE initiatives in order to ensure success

## Recommendations

Based on our analysis and our understanding of the state of Nevada and what we learned from the comparison states, we have a few areas where we recommend the State of Nevada Department of Education, Office of Early Learning and Development focus its efforts moving forward:

- 1) Improve ECCE data accessibility and consistency. Robust and complete data sources allow for improved decision-making and the ability to track program successes.
- 2) Work to reduce the number of childcare deserts in Nevada. Over 70% of the state lives in an area with limited access to childcare.
- 3) Streamline funding and improve efficiencies in order to help underserved populations. Nevada is positioned to deliver a wrap-around style of care management for its

youngest learners due to the strength of alignment amongst ECCE stakeholder groups.

- 4) Consider a diversity of funding sources. Other states rely on a blend of state, federal, and local taxes to help fund their ECCE systems. Some even have private philanthropic organizations contribute financially to government ECCE programs.
- 5) Develop private support for expanded ECCE initiatives. Whether its support for legislative efforts or financial support for pilot programs, other states have strategically leveraged the business and philanthropic communities to grow and strengthen their statewide ECCE systems.
- 6) Invest in Nevada Silver State Stars. This will allow the state to ensure its youngest learners are receiving the most solid foundation for success.
- 7) Invest in provider and family engagement campaigns in conjunction with new ECCE program launch. This will ensure strong take-up rates and effective spend of public dollars.

## Section I. Analysis of Nevada’s Early Childhood Care and Education Landscape

### Data and Methods

Data was curated for the analysis of Nevada’s current provider landscape from three primary sources:

- 1) Nevada State Childcare Licensing page<sup>1</sup> This includes licensed childcare providers – but does not include school-based programs or informal care settings, typically known as Family, Friend, and Neighbor (FFN)
- 2) A list of Nevada Silver State Star Ratings and subsidy participation provided from the Nevada Department of Health and Human Services
- 3) Providers from the Washoe County Childcare Inspections web page<sup>2</sup> - Note that Washoe County administers their own childcare licensing program and these providers are not administered through the state. However, the state Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS), Nevada Silver State Stars and subsidy enrollment figures are state-administered programs.

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<sup>1</sup> Nevada State Child Care Licensing page located at: <http://findchildcare.nv.gov>

Each of these data sources were provided in September 2019. In addition to these sources, the analyses utilized United States Census Bureau data for child populations and other demographics. Census Bureau data used includes 5-year estimates from the American Community Survey from 2017 – this represents the most recent and stable data available for analysis. We worked specifically with the Nevada Department of Education Office of Early Learning, the Nevada Department of Human Services Department of Welfare and Social Services, the Nevada Department of Human Services Division of Public and Behavioral Health, and Washoe County Human Services Agency in order to get state level data.

We also used data and analyses conducted by the Center for American Progress. The Center has provided leading resources pertaining to the determinants of childcare deserts. Their methodology is considered to be the best resource on the technical definition of childcare deserts – specifically the ratio of three children under age five per single slot of available childcare. They have also contributed to the current literature on

<sup>2</sup> A list of providers from the Child Care Inspections web page located at: <http://childcareinspections.washoecounty.us/>

the costs of childcare administration. The primary article on this topic provides a detailed review of the costs that a childcare provider may face in the course of operating their business.<sup>3</sup> This resource, however, is largely limited to the direct costs associated with the business operations of a facility, not family care or group care. There is also a companion report from that offers a broader perspective for policymakers.<sup>4</sup> This resource can be used to better estimate quality incentives while also allowing users to compare state regulations to nationally accepted standards – for example, it provides ratio and group size limitations developed by the National Association for the Education of the Young Child (NAEYC) as a baseline for states to consider when indicating best practices that may be beyond state licensing standards.

The previously referenced data sources were compiled in spreadsheet format with data records manually compared across data sets to identify duplicate or erroneous information. Once sites were sufficiently scrubbed, the combined dataset was loaded into QGIS and each location was reverse geocoded to generate latitude and longitude coordinates. These coordinates

then served as the base for additional geocoding – specifically for PUMA (Public Use Micro Area) identification, but also for turning geocodes into zip codes, census tracts, counties, and metropolitan regions for sites. For childcare desert calculations, the sum of each region’s capacity was totaled and compared to the region’s number of children under five years old. Any ratios that were below 0.3 were then determined to be a childcare desert.

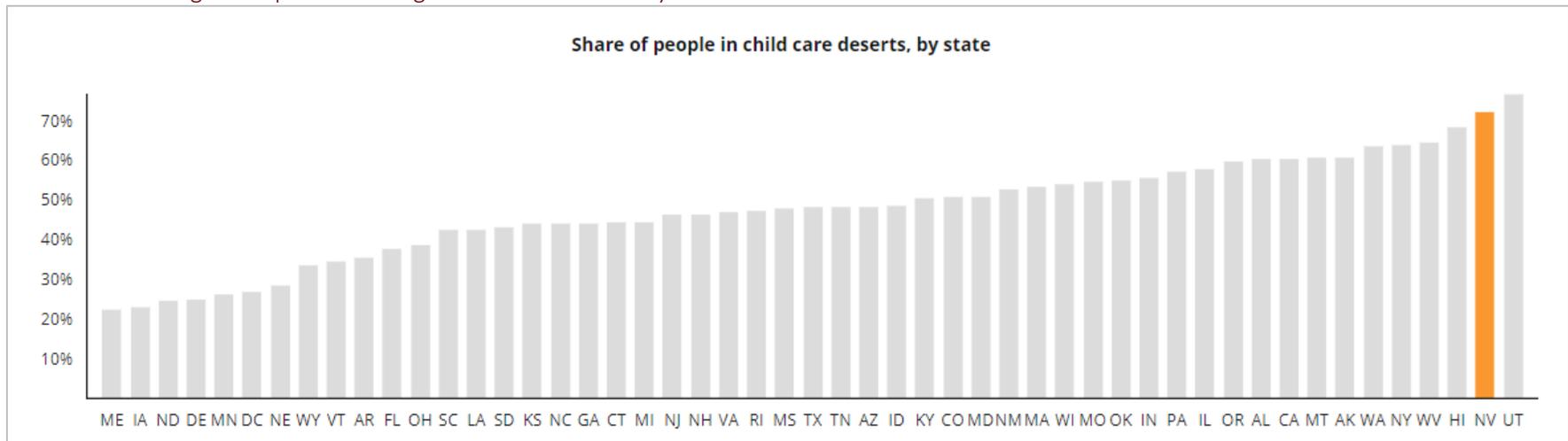
The primary geographical unit of analysis for these analyses has been at the PUMA (Public Use Micro Area) level. These are defined by the Census and consist of 100,000 or more people. There are 18 Public Use Micro Areas in Nevada. Because these regions are defined by population, there are several smaller areas around the metropolitan hubs, while all of central Nevada is considered “Rural.” These PUMAs provide a helpful lens to evaluate data in a way that is more granular than at the full state level but larger than census tracts. As the primary unit of analysis for this report, it is noted that each PUMA is fully located within Nevada – unlike zip codes which occasionally cross state

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<sup>3</sup> Workman, Simon. “Where does your child care dollar go?”. February 114, 2018. Accessed via <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/early-childhood/reports/2018/02/14/446330/child-care-dollar-go/>

<sup>4</sup> Workman, Simon. ‘Where does your child care dollar go?’ Methodology Report. February 2018. PDF. Accessed via <https://cdn.americanprogress.org/content/uploads/2018/02/14040126/ChildcareDollar-Methodology.pdf>

Chart 1. Percentage of Population Living in Childcare Deserts by State



Source: Center for American Progress, <https://childcaredeserts.org/>

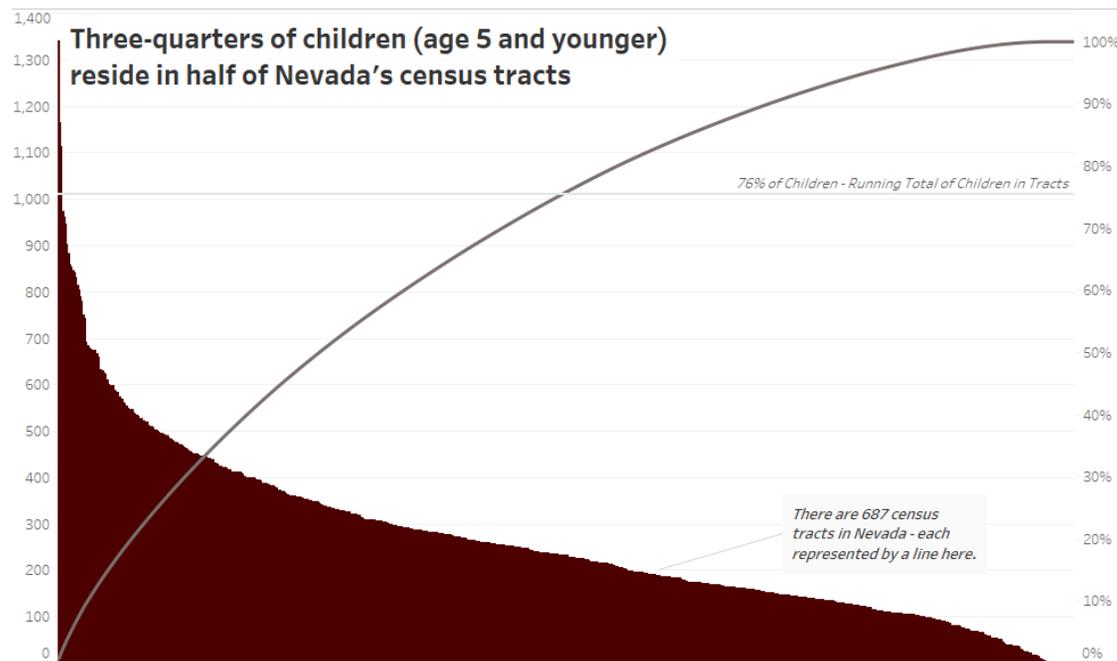
borders and are generally not considered adequate for analytical purposes. Zip codes represent postal delivery routes and were never intended to represent physical areas.

We also compiled data on the number of childcare providers that are rated in the Nevada Silver State Stars Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS). Nevada Silver State Stars is a voluntary program that any licensed childcare provider may participate in – this includes childcare centers, licensed home providers and school-based programs. Participation in Nevada Silver State Stars is a requirement for accepting subsidy payments on behalf of families. Data points on QRIS participation

were tabulated and compared to the overall population of providers in each region.

Finally, supplemental data was collected on the underserved populations in Nevada – inclusive of tribal populations, children receiving early intervention services (specifically through IDEA Part C), and state subsidy participation. These data points were informed by stakeholder interviews and conversations with staff from the Nevada Department of Health and Human Services – Division of Welfare and Supportive Services, as well as the Nevada Department of Education – Office of Early Learning and Development.

Chart 2. Nevada’s Population Concentration by Census Tract



### Nevada Population Disbursement Overview

We used research conducted by the Center for American Progress in order to understand the number of children in Nevada affected by a shortage of childcare. Chart 1 on the previous page summarizes one of their conclusions and indicates that Nevada has the second highest share of its population living in childcare deserts – outranked only by neighboring Utah.

Their report also indicated that people of color (specifically Non-Hispanic, black/African American and Hispanic/Latino populations) and low-income neighborhoods are adversely affected by childcare deserts compared to Non-Hispanic, white and high-income neighborhoods.<sup>5</sup>

In addition to the figures pertaining to childcare deserts, Nevada has two primary and heavily concentrated urban areas, while

<sup>5</sup> For more detail, please visit <https://childcaredeserts.org/index.html?state=NV>

the rest of the state is considered rural. Chart 2 on the previous page represents Census Bureau data for the number of children living in each census tract. For this chart, please note that census tracts are used in lieu of PUMAs. This is because census tracts are less sensitive to large fluctuations in population and building an effective pareto chart requires many data points – there are 687 census tracts and only 18 PUMAs. Notably, more than **three-quarters** of Nevada’s children live in only half of the state’s 687 census tracts, which are specifically located around the Las Vegas and Reno/Carson City urban areas.

Table 1. Providers by Type by Nevada County

COUNTY	FAMILY CARE	GROUP CARE	CENTER	INSTITUTION	SCHOOL BASED	Grand Total
CARSON CITY	1	2	14		4	21
CHURCHILL		3	6		1	10
CLARK	61	21	240	1	20	343
DOUGLAS	2		11			13
ELKO		2	11		6	19
HUMBOLDT	1	2	3		1	7
LANDER		1	2			3
LYON	3	3	8		8	22
MINERAL					1	1
NYE		2	3		7	12
PERSHING			1		1	2
WASHOE	5	1	49	3	22	80
WHITE PINE			3		2	5
<b>Total</b>						<b>538</b>

### Provider Landscape Overview

Based on our analysis, this section of the report contains an overview of existing childcare providers in Nevada, their locations throughout the state, and the extent to which they are serving the current population of eligible children (specifically those five years old and younger). While most of our analysis was completed with the public use micro area (PUMA) being the geographic area of focus, for readers interested in a county-level summary of providers, Table 1 on this page provides a breakdown of the number and type of childcare providers within each county.

Our analysis identified 538 licensed childcare providers in Nevada. As table 1 illustrates, over half of these are in Clark County. Note that “Family Care” and “Group Care” settings are childcare facilities in residential homes, while “Centers” and “Institutions” are stand-alone facilities – the “Institution” settings also provide supplemental care services for at-risk youth. Finally, “School Based” Settings are childcare classrooms located in school-district run buildings. These facilities typically enroll pre-school aged children. Approximately one-fifth of these providers are family or group care facilities and the others are center-based, institution or school-based programs. Our review of the data indicated that approximately 40% of the providers (227 of 538) have obtained a state QRIS rating. Of those with a rating,

nearly half had a quality rating of three stars or higher. Finally, 43% of all providers had served subsidy enrollments.

Table 2 on this page lists each of the PUMA regions and the number of childcare providers in each. Graphic 1, on the following page, highlights more detail with regards to the output of the PUMA analysis. In particular, it shows the urban-rural divide. 10,346 children under five live in the large rural swath in the middle of the state, while there are only 1,615 childcare slots. In contrast, in the southeast corner of the state, the high concentration of providers around Las Vegas is evident. Similarly, along the western edge of the state there is a reasonably dense set of providers around the Reno, Sparks and Carson City PUMAs.

Our analysis of the data, along with relevant data from the United States Census Bureau, suggests there are material limitations in the ability of the current system of childcare to provide enough care to the eligible population. Like the state’s population, most providers are also located in the concentrated urban areas of Las Vegas, Reno, Sparks and Carson City, a fact highlighted by Tables 1 and 2.

Quality investments vary across PUMA regions as well – in nine regions there are fewer than one-third of the licensed care

Table 2. Providers by Public Use Micro Area

Public Use Micro Area	N Providers
Carson City, Lyon, Douglas & Storey Counties	44
Clark County (Central): Greater North Las Vegas City	17
Clark County (Central): Henderson City (West)	45
Clark County (Central): Paradise (Northwest) & Winchester	15
Clark County (Central): Paradise (South) & Enterprise	26
Clark County (Central): Spring Valley & Summerlin South	49
Clark County (Central): Whitney, Sunrise Manor (South) & Paradise (Northeast)	9
Clark County (East): Mesquite City, Sunrise Manor (North), Moapa Valley & Nellis AFB	10
Clark County (North): Las Vegas (Northeast) & North Las Vegas (Outer) Cities	28
Clark County (Northwest Central): Northwest Las Vegas Valley	26
Clark County (South): Henderson (East) & Boulder Cities	16
Clark County (West): Las Vegas City (Southwest)	28
Las Vegas City (South Central)	26
Las Vegas City (Southeast)	25
Rural Nevada	40
Washoe County (North): Sparks City	123
Washoe County (South Central): Reno City	8
Unable to confidently identify	3
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>538</b>

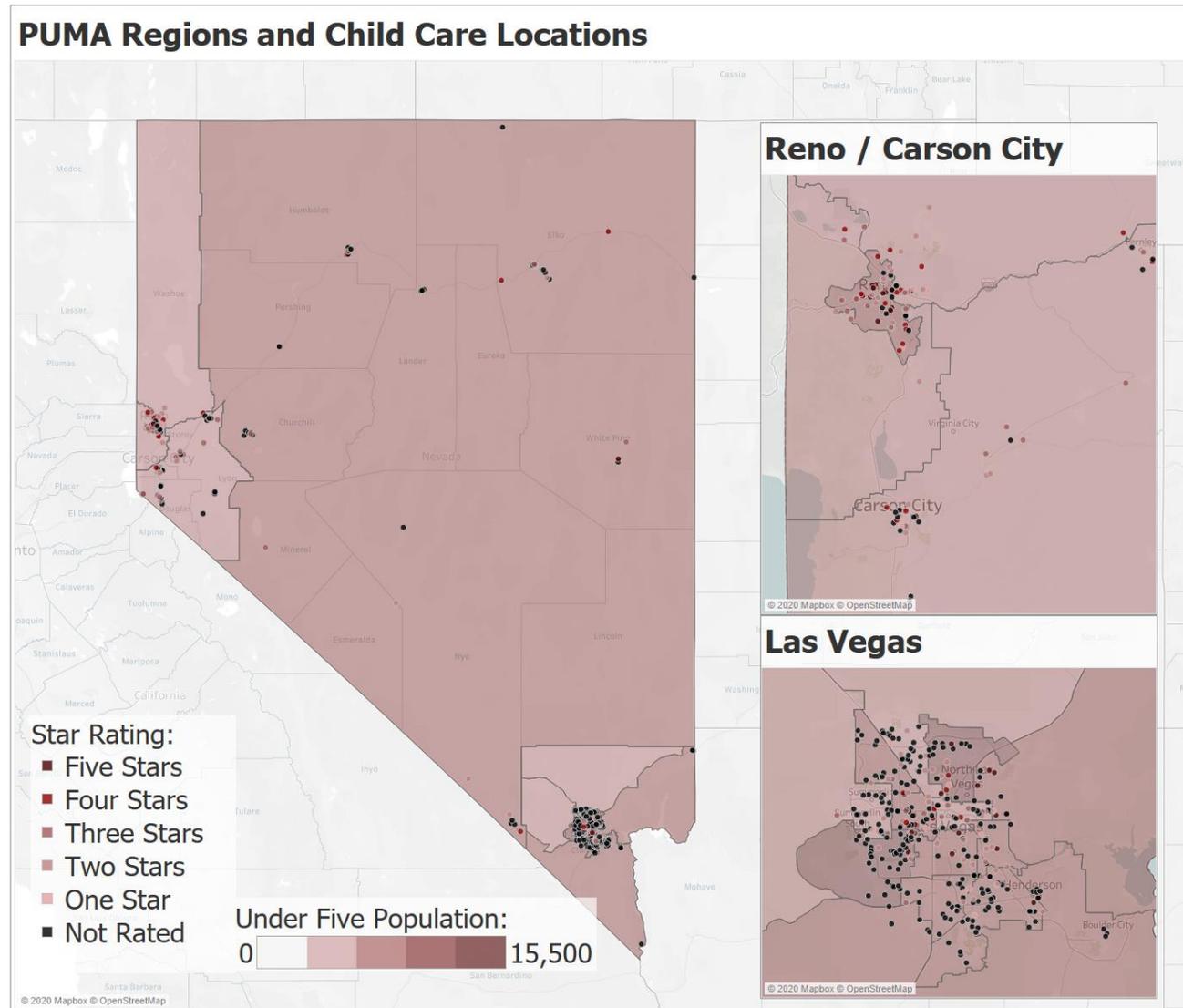
providers rated in the Nevada State Silver Stars Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS). Note that the QRIS is a 5 level rating system, with each level indicating a higher degree of observed quality. The QRIS data also indicated that there are waiting lists to be rated. As mentioned earlier, Nevada currently requires providers to participate in the state QRIS in order to

participate in the statewide childcare subsidy program. This offers providers an opportunity to enhance the quality of their programs and provide benefit to low-income children, but it also can serve as a barrier to new providers participating.

In addition to highlighting the results of our PUMA analysis, Graphic 1, on this page, also highlights participation rates amongst providers in Nevada Silver State Stars across the state. As of this writing, only about 40% of licensed providers had obtained a rating in this voluntary system. Of those that are rated, approximately half have obtained a rating of three stars or higher, while the other half are rated at one star or two stars. Both provider availability and provider quality ratings make up key features of the cost estimation tool which has been developed in conjunction with this report.

The underlying data for these analyses may be further explored to identify specific

Graphic 1. Providers by Public Use Micro Area



targets and areas for future growth. For example, the data collected offers enough information to not only identify childcare deserts, quality participation and subsidy enrollment, but can also be evaluated to identify areas where there may be prime investment opportunities for new providers or providing targeted supports to existing providers.

### Landscape Findings

- Thirteen of eighteen PUMAs were identified as childcare deserts (having more than three children under age five for each childcare slot).
- Nine of eighteen PUMAs had fewer than one-third of the licensed facilities rated in Nevada Silver State Stars.
- Fifteen of eighteen PUMAs appear to be serving fewer than 50% of children experiencing poverty through subsidy care.
- Five of the eighteen PUMAs meet all three of the conditions specified above.

Table 3 on the following page identifies each Public Use Micro Area and the conditions met in each.

Overall, these summative data points suggest that the childcare ecosystem of Nevada has not yet matured to the point of being able to serve the broad and diverse needs of the state. A Nevada Birth through Five Needs Assessment was conducted as another component of the PDG B-5 Nevada ECCE Systems work. While

the Needs Assessment may better inform the capacity component of future fiscal analyses, a full validation study on the Nevada Silver State Stars QRIS would help inform quality rating expansion. Typically, a validation study will answer questions of whether or not there is meaningful differentiation between quality levels and whether or not the quality levels are consistent across providers. Such analyses can better inform not only policy makers and state administrators, but also the general public of the importance of quality – and how to identify quality – early care.

Table 3. Capacity, QRIS Participation, and Subsidy Enrollment by Nevada Public Use Micro Area

<b>Public Use Micro Area</b>	<b>Capacity as a Percent of Children</b>	<b>Percent QRIS Rated</b>	<b>Subsidy Enrollment Estimate as a Percent of Children Under 200% FPL</b>
<i>(Highlighted PUMAs meet the three conditions specified)</i>	<i>(Figures below 33% highlighted)</i>	<i>(Figures below 33% highlighted)</i>	<i>(Figures below 50% highlighted)</i>
Carson City, Lyon, Douglas & Storey Counties	28%	57%	49%
Clark County (Central)--Greater North Las Vegas City	10%	35%	30%
Clark County (Central)--Henderson City (West)	44%	26%	86%
Clark County (Central)--Paradise (Northwest) & Winchester	17%	56%	27%
Clark County (Central)--Paradise (South) & Enterprise	29%	15%	35%
Clark County (Central)--Spring Valley & Summerlin South	39%	18%	57%
Clark County (Central)--Whitney, Sunrise Manor (South) & Paradise (Northeast)	7%	58%	60%
Clark County (East)--Mesquite City, Sunrise Manor (North), Moapa Valley & Nellis AFB	5%	43%	6%
Clark County (North)--Las Vegas (Northeast) & North Las Vegas (Outer) Cities	29%	25%	42%
Clark County (Northwest Central)--Northwest Las Vegas Valley	19%	31%	38%
Clark County (South)--Henderson (East) & Boulder Cities	12%	13%	9%
Clark County (West)--Las Vegas City (Southwest)	50%	18%	48%
Las Vegas City (South Central)	21%	40%	32%
Las Vegas City (Southeast)	20%	54%	31%
Washoe County (South Central)--Reno City	53%	40%	28%
Washoe County (South)	19%	13%	12%
Washoe County (North)--Sparks City	36%	19%	26%
Rural Nevada	16%	42%	13%

## Section II. Understanding the Strengths and Weaknesses of Nevada’s Current ECCE Model

This section of the report highlights strengths and weaknesses of the current childcare and early learning financing systems in Nevada. The results of these analyses will suggest strengths to build upon while targeting areas of concern.

### Data and Methods

This section is based on stakeholder interviews and the landscape analysis presented in Section I. A list of potential stakeholders was requested from the Nevada Office of Early Learning and Development. We received a list of 22 individuals who were contacted for interviews. The list consisted of a mix of individuals working in a variety of early care offices, private operators of childcare facilities, school principals, and other coordinators. After reaching out to these individuals, twelve individuals responded and ultimately nine provided interviews or responded to a written questionnaire in place of an interview.

Conversations with stakeholders revealed consistent themes with regards to areas where the state is strong, and areas in which stakeholders saw room for improvement. As outlined in more detail in the following sections, the strengths identified pertained to the revised subsidy rates and collaboration between

agencies. However, many stakeholders suggested that the lack of available care settings, having concrete goals to address known problems, and how to adequately care for underserved children with special needs were all problems identified by stakeholders. In addition, stakeholders understood the need for more comprehensive and on-demand data.

### Strengths

Two primary strengths emerged during the analysis of the early care system in Nevada.

#### 1. Revised subsidy rates

In 2018, an influx of funds from the Federal Childcare & Development Block Grant (CCDBG), resulted in an increase to Nevada childcare subsidy rates from the 2004 market rate to a 2015 market rate. Current rates are outlined in the Sliding Fee Schedule in the Childcare Policy Manual of the Division of

***“Definitely subsidy and reimbursement rates influence the provider landscape. We need to work to increase that... Providers are recouping more as a result.”***

Welfare and Supportive Services. These subsidy amounts range between 20% and 95% for selected individuals – with 130% of Federal Poverty Level as the cut-off point between “At-Risk” and “Discretionary” funding levels. As a result of this increase in public funding, more providers were able to participate in the subsidy program, which resulted in a corresponding reduction in waitlists for eligible children.

The revision of state subsidy reimbursement rates is certainly a step in the right direction, offering more affordable childcare to families that may otherwise be priced out of care participation. Although the revised rates have offered a significant boost to those currently participating, it falls short of funding the growing needs of the NV childcare ecosystem. With the updated rates, funds were increased to support the care of participating children – indicating that providers received an increase in each reimbursement per child enrolled. Additional funding for similar programs will be necessary to continue serving Nevada’s highest need children. It is noted in external policy reviews that Nevada has some of the lowest rates of subsidy enrollment of the eligible population in the nation.<sup>6</sup> This may be due to several factors –

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<sup>6</sup> According to a 2019 policy review by CLASP (Center for Law and Social Policy) titled “Inequitable Access to Child Care Subsidies”, between 3.8% and 7.8% of eligible children in Nevada are served with CCDBG based child care subsidies. Enrollment is assumed to be

such as the initial lack of providers and capacity (thus, not enough opportunities to deliver funds), lack of awareness of the program among the eligible population, and finally – as noted by state administrator – some providers see the requirement of participating in the Nevada Silver State Stars program as a hurdle to participating in the subsidy program.

**2. Agency alignment and cross-department collaboration**

*“In the past 2 and a half to 3 years we’ve really seen true collaboration with the state and our work”*

In many stakeholder interviews, it was clear that cross-department alignment and collaboration was at the forefront of many ECCE efforts. Specifically, entities such as the Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council were discussed as collaborative and impactful. Such alignment and collaboration will be a strong asset when considering shared and mutual goals in developing a robust Early Childhood Care and Education system.

artificially low due to lack of available care settings. For more information: [https://www.clasp.org/sites/default/files/publications/2019/04/2019\\_inequitableaccess.pdf](https://www.clasp.org/sites/default/files/publications/2019/04/2019_inequitableaccess.pdf)

**Weaknesses**

In Nevada, there are several limitations of the existing ECCE ecosystem.

**1. Childcare deserts**

*“There are still childcare deserts where there are not enough programs... and the good programs have waiting lists, or you know they're not affordable”*

The primary area of weakness in the Nevada Early Childhood Care and Education system is the lack of available care. Not only is the lack of licensed care potentially prohibiting some parents from returning fully to the workforce, but childcare settings can also be an effective mechanism for delivering mental health, parent support, and other services.

**2. Identification of goals pertaining to QRIS and subsidy participation**

Throughout the stakeholder interview process, it became clear that many individuals consistently focused on the problems afflicting the childcare industry in Nevada. With the notable exception of the subsidy program, there was little discussion of goals, targets, or strategies to improve other issues – such as

delivering services to underserved populations, expanding quality rating participation to more providers, or even how to increase the number of licensed providers. Issues such as worker fatigue, lack of funding, lack of services to underserved populations and other topics were discussed without a clear direction for solutions to resolve these issues.

*“The Quality Rating and Improvement System... the feedback from providers is that it is a very cumbersome process to participate.”*

**3. Service delivery to underserved populations**

The third prominent area identified as a limitation is the provision of services to underserved populations in Nevada. The analyses focused on three sub-populations: tribal communities, early intervention services (specifically IDEA Part C participation), and subsidy participation. It is possible that there is some degree of overlap among these populations, but the actual extent is not known.

*“Childcare providers don’t have the training to serve children with disabilities.”*

**4. Access to readily available data**

Finally, interoperability among childcare data systems is lacking. While assembling data sets used for analysis, unique provider identifiers were not consistent. Additionally, some datasets were entirely missing some childcare providers, while they existed in other sets. Based on this example of base-level data issues, as well as stakeholder feedback reflecting the same, inadequate data systems and inaccurate data are a current weakness. This

issue will continue to hinder system improvement over time if not addressed soon. Developing an Early Childhood Integrated Data System would vastly improve the efficiency of analytical decisions and support tools for policy makers and system administrators.

## Section III. Understanding ECCE Service Delivery and Financing Models of Other States

The following section of this report contains overviews of Early Childhood Care and Education service delivery and financing models of other states. Four comparison states were selected for analysis: Colorado, Ohio, Oklahoma, and Tennessee. Although none of the comparison states are perfectly like Nevada, each presents valuable comparisons for building and developing successful ECCE models at the state level. Each state represents a distinct model with regards to service delivery and financing, ranging from strong local control to state-wide universal pe-kindergarten. There is value in understanding the strengths and weaknesses of each model as the state of Nevada explores different possibilities for ECCE program growth and structure.

### Data and Methods

Research for this section was conducted using a variety of methods and sources. In order to understand the demographics of each state, we relied heavily on U.S Census data, pulling both from the American Community Survey and from the Current Population Survey. Specific state sources, including various Departments of Education and Departments of Human Services, were consulted in order to build a landscape overview of each

state's preschool program and subsidy program. Federal sources, such as the US Department of Health and Human Services, were also consulted in order to understand the flow of federal funding in support of childcare subsidy programs and Head Start. A variety of secondary sources were also consulted, including research by ChildCare Aware, the Colorado Fiscal Institute, the Oklahoma Policy Institute, the National Institute for Early Education Research, and the National Head Start Association. To complement this primary and secondary research, interviews were conducted with Early Childhood Care and Education stakeholders in each of the comparison states in order to confirm assumptions and gather more detail on each state's landscape. Stakeholders represented a variety of organizations and agencies, including state governments, policy and research organizations, and childcare providers.

**Colorado** was selected for its profile as a fast-growing western mountain state, and the fact that in aggregate, it is like Nevada geographically and demographically. Like Nevada, it is approximately 100,000 square miles in size and most of both state's populations are concentrated in a few major metropolitan

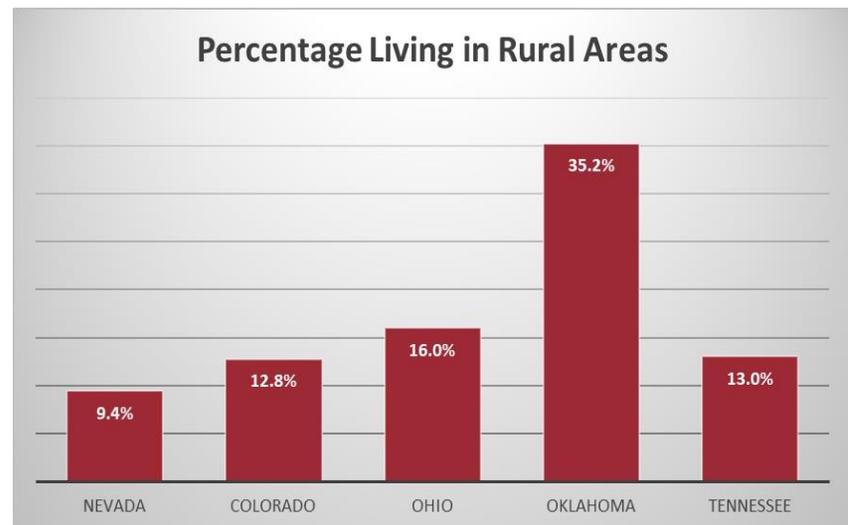
areas. As Chart 3 details, roughly 10% of both state populations are considered rural. Equitable distribution of resources to rural areas vs. urban areas is a powerful ongoing policy debate in both states. Understanding that Nevada has a goal of expanding ECCE service offerings, Colorado is best seen as one example of serving a geographically diverse state.

Colorado also offers a unique financing and administrative perspective because many ECCE programs in the state are administered at a local level – school districts administer the state preschool program while county Department of Human Services offices administer the state childcare subsidy program. Colorado also has multiple local childcare and preschool subsidy programs. Accordingly, Colorado offers examples with regards to locally funded ECCE programs.

**Ohio** has a much larger population than Nevada (11.6 million versus 2.9 million inhabitants) and is geographically dissimilar with a substantially larger rural population (16% of the overall population) than Nevada. The state’s newly elected governor, Mike DeWine, is highly committed to increasing funding for and access to ECCE programs, including family support programs and the state childcare subsidy. As a result, Ohio offers interesting points of comparison for Nevada as it works to strengthen its pre-existing systems. While Ohio relies heavily on a strong

centralized administration of its statewide programs, it also has several thriving locally funded and administered preschool programs that are working to address the gaps left by the state programs.

Chart 3. Percentage of Comparison States Living in Rural Areas



**Oklahoma** was selected for comparison because it has a large tribal population and offers examples on how to effectively serve an American Indian population within a state. Additionally, many consider Oklahoma’s ECCE service delivery model aspirational, because it is one of three states that offers universal pre-k for all 4-year-old children (Florida and Georgia being the other two states, with Washington, D.C. also offering a universal pre-k

program).<sup>7</sup> Accordingly, Oklahoma offers valuable examples with regards to a commitment to the delivery of high quality ECCE on the state level, and interesting political ideas for how to fund and gain legislative support for expanded ECCE offerings.

Chart 4. Per Capita Taxes Collected by State



**Tennessee** was selected for comparison because like Nevada, it does not charge a state income tax on its residents. Therefore, it offers an example for how a state may fund ECCE programs

<sup>7</sup> Louisa Diffey, Emily Parker and Bruce Atchison, “How States Fund Pre-K: A Primer for Policymakers,” February 2018, PDF, Accessed via [https://www.ecs.org/wp-content/uploads/How-States-Fund-Pre-K\\_A-Primer-for-Policymakers.pdf](https://www.ecs.org/wp-content/uploads/How-States-Fund-Pre-K_A-Primer-for-Policymakers.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> United States Census Bureau, “2017 State & Local Government Finance Historical Datasets and Tables,” 2017, Accessed via

without income tax proceeds. Instead, Tennessee relies on sales taxes, licensing fees, and taxes on investment income in order to generate revenue. As a result, Tennessee collects approximately \$800 less in per capita tax at the state level (not factoring in local tax revenues) than the national average.<sup>8</sup> Subsequently, Tennessee must rely on other sources of funding in order to cover the cost of ECCE services, including federal revenue and philanthropic dollars.

For detailed demographic profiles of these four states compared to Nevada, please visit tables 1 and 2 in the Appendix.

### State Preschool Programs Overview

With permanent funding secured in 1992 by the legislature, most low-income and at-risk children in Colorado have access to the state’s preschool funding program, the Colorado Preschool Program (CPP). The program is administered by school districts, and 96% of Colorado’s 179 districts participate in the program. Eligibility for CPP is based on several factors, including homelessness, young parental age, and history of abuse, with the

<https://www.census.gov/data/datasets/2017/econ/local/public-use-datasets.html>; Federation of Tax Administrators, “2018 State Tax Revenue,” Accessed via <https://www.taxadmin.org/2018-state-tax-revenue>

most common factor being income - 77.5% of participants live at or under 185% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL). The program is funded through the state’s K-12 funding formula, and most slots are available in public schools, although districts can subcontract with private providers if they choose. All schools with CPP slots, both private and public, participate in the state QRIS, Colorado Shines.

Ohio’s state preschool program is the Ohio Department of Education Public Preschool Program (ODE). It’s not currently offered statewide – only 65% of Ohio’s school districts offer program slots, which leaves a significant portion of the population underserved. Within those 65% of school districts, slots are found both in public schools and at private providers, and families must fall under 200% of the Federal Poverty Level. Funding can be used to serve 3- and 4-year-olds, although slots must be used for eligible 4-year-olds before they can be allotted to 3-year-olds. ODE was the first public funding source in Ohio to mandate providers be high quality, as determined by a 3-, 4-, or 5-star rating in Step Up to Quality, the state’s QRIS. ODE slots are funded primarily by state general funds (around \$65 million

a year) with a smaller portion covered by casino settlement funds (around \$5 million a year).

Oklahoma’s Universal Pre-K program (UPK) was launched in 1998 when the state legislature approved adding an additional age group into the state’s school funding formula. Although some claim that it was quietly folded into a larger education reform bill, resulting in legislators not being fully aware of what they were voting for,<sup>9</sup> others state that there was a long history of private sector support for UPK in the lead up to the bill passing.<sup>10</sup> It is optional for school districts to participate, although almost all do (99%).



<sup>9</sup> Alex Blumberg, “Getting Away with It,” October 19, 2012, This American Life Episode 477, American Public Media, Accessed via <https://www.thisamericanlife.org/477/getting-away-with-it>

<sup>10</sup> Conversation with Stanford Research Institute, November 15, 2019 and conversation with Oklahoma Policy Institute, January 14, 2020

Due to the state-wide availability and popularity of the program, participation rates are very high when compared to other programs across the US. 74% of Oklahoma 4-year-olds are enrolled in the program.<sup>11</sup> UPK is offered primarily through public schools, although districts can place teachers in community childcare centers and serve children in those locations as well. UPK was rolled out with a high emphasis on quality, and the requirement that all UPK teachers have at least a bachelor's degree. All UPK teachers are also required to have professional development plans in place and receive coaching in order to further their skills. The state also has established benchmarks for measuring student success in a variety of areas,



<sup>11</sup> W. Steven Barnett, Nicole DiCrecchio, Allison Friedman-Krauss, Karin Garver, Karin Hodges, and G.G. Weisenfeld, "The State of Preschool 2018: State Preschool Yearbook," *National Institute of Early Education Research*,

including language arts, math, science, and social skills, which assist teachers and schools in curriculum development. This quality rating program is separate from Reaching for the Stars, the state QRIS, which is only used in measuring the quality of private providers.

Tennessee's state preschool program, Voluntary Pre-K (VPK) was passed by the General Assembly in 2005. This program relies on different funding sources, including general education funds, lottery revenue, federal TANF dollars, and local school district matching funds. It currently serves 22% of 4-year-olds in the state. VPK is a mixed delivery model, meaning that Local Educational Agencies apply for Voluntary Pre-K Funds, and are then able to contract with private care providers, Head Start centers, institutions of higher education and public housing authorities if they are unable to fully provide slots in public schools. However, this is fairly rare, and predominantly only happens through Head Start centers when it does occur. Like Oklahoma, Tennessee's state QRIS, TN Star Quality, is only used to measure the quality of private providers, and a separate system is used to measure public school quality.

PDF, Accessed via [http://nieer.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/YB2018\\_Full-ReportR3wAppendices.pdf](http://nieer.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/YB2018_Full-ReportR3wAppendices.pdf)

Voluntary Pre-K has come under national scrutiny in the wake of a 2018 study by Vanderbilt University’s Peabody Research Office, which showed that initial gains made by Voluntary Pre-K students had faded by 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. Initial speculation was that the Pre-K programs were not of high enough quality to make a difference in the lives of students. However, subsequent analysis now generally supports that the “fade” effect is largely due to lack of quality in early elementary school classrooms.<sup>12</sup> Tennessee’s experience offers a powerful lesson in the importance of alignment in standards, quality, and curriculum between ECCE classrooms and early elementary school grades.

For a detailed comparison of these four state preschool programs, please see table 4 in the Appendix.

### State Childcare Subsidy Overview

Colorado’s childcare subsidy program, the Colorado Childcare Assistance Program, or CCAP, is administered at the county level. While each county must operate under federal regulations governing the Childcare Development Block Grant (CCDBG) funds, counties have the flexibility to set their own income

eligibility requirements within those guidelines. All counties must provide support for families that fall under 185% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL), but some counties serve families up to 265% FPL.<sup>13</sup> Families must apply for support through their county’s Department of Human Services office. Only recently did the state mandate that families who move between counties maintain eligibility.<sup>14</sup> Before that, a family would have to apply anew after moving. Due to the localized control over administration, each county tends to operate very differently. All follow the same reimbursement schedule, but some have much higher utilization rates than others, and access to funding varies widely depending on where a family lives in the state.

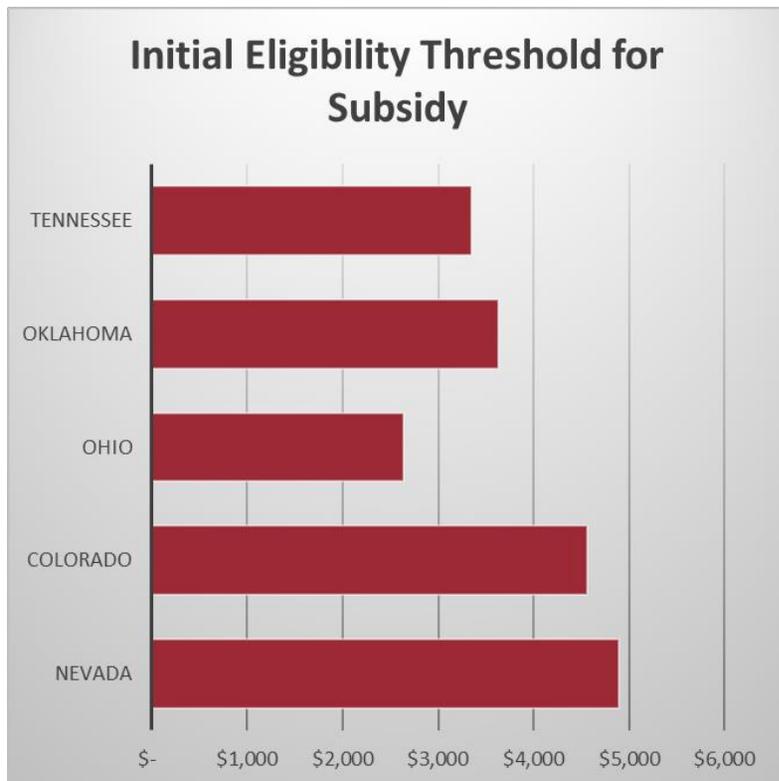
Ohio’s childcare subsidy program, Publicly Funded Childcare (PFCC), is administered by the state department of Job and Family Services. Ohio’s subsidy program currently has the second worst initial eligibility limit in the country; a family must be at 130% of the Federal Poverty Level or below in order to qualify. This means that many low-income Ohio families are ineligible to receive help in paying for childcare. Governor

<sup>12</sup> Marta Aldrich, “Pre-K benefits faded in Tennessee – but not for the reasons you think, says new study,” *Chalkbeat*, August 2, 2019. Accessed via <https://chalkbeat.org/posts/tn/2019/08/02/pre-k-benefits-faded-in-tennessee-but-not-for-the-reasons-you-think-says-new-study/>

<sup>13</sup> Colorado Department of Human Services, “Child Care Assistance,” 2019 Accessed via <https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdhs/child-care-assistance>

<sup>14</sup> Colorado Fiscal Institute, “Caring for Our Future,” June 26, 2019, Accessed via <https://www.coloradofiscal.org/2019/06/caring-for-our-future/>

Chart 6. Initial Child Care Subsidy Eligibility Thresholds by State



DeWine has expressed a desire to raise this limit to 150% of the Federal Poverty Level but has yet to enact the change. Like the rest of the country, Ohio saw a sizable increase to its CCDBG

funds in 2018, which the state used to increase reimbursement rates to align more closely to the results of the state’s 2018 market rate survey.<sup>15</sup> While this was a critical step in providing much needed funds to both providers and families, the state will hopefully find additional funding in order to increase the eligibility level for families across the state. ECCE policy advocates in Ohio recommend increasing the initial eligibility level to 200% FPL, allowing for a much higher level of self-sufficiency amongst working families.<sup>16</sup> Currently, there is no quality requirement for providers to participate in PFCC, although that will change in June of 2020 to reflect Ohio’s commitment to ensuring kindergarten readiness for all children. Once this change takes effect, the state will require all providers who accept PFCC funds on behalf of families to participate in the state QRIS, Step Up to Quality. In support of this requirement, the state has partnered with local ECCE advocacy and support organizations to provide coaching and quality improvement resources to providers to ready them for the rating process.

<sup>15</sup> Kimberly Hall, “Child Care Manual Procedure Letter No. 128 (2019 Update to Publicly Funded Child Care County Categories and Provider Payment Rates,” July 19, 2019, Accessed via <http://emanuals.jfs.ohio.gov/ChildCare/ChildCareManual/CCMPL/CCMPL-128.stm>

<sup>16</sup> Groundwork Ohio, “Publicly Funded Child Care: An Essential Support for Working Families,” June 22, 2018, Accessed via <https://www.groundworkohio.org/single-post/2018/06/22/Publicly-Funded-Child-Care-An-Essential-Support-for-Working-Families>

Oklahoma’s Childcare Subsidy program is where the state is weakest with regards to ECCE service delivery. Despite the fact that more than 48% of children ages 0 through 5 in Oklahoma qualify for assistance as a result of falling under 85% of the State Median Income, somewhere between 8 and 15% of eligible children are actually served by the program.<sup>17</sup> The largest issue that Oklahoma faces is a shortage of licensed facilities that participate in the subsidy program. Of 3,082 licensed childcare providers in Oklahoma, only half have a subsidy contract with the state.<sup>18</sup> With the 2018 CCDBG increase, the state has been working on increasing reimbursement rates, expanding eligibility, lowering copayments, and investing in quality improvement initiatives in order to help bring new providers into the market.<sup>19</sup>

Like Nevada, Oklahoma struggles with childcare deserts. 55% of the state’s population lives in an area with fewer than one childcare slot for every three children under age five. This problem seems to be worsening, with the number of licensed childcare providers decreasing nearly 30% in the past decade in

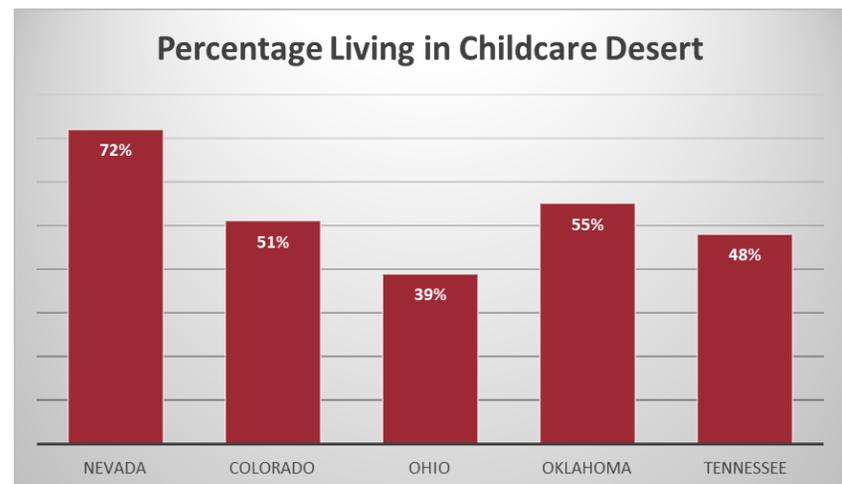
<sup>17</sup> ChildCare Aware, “Child Care and Development Block Grant,” 2019, Accessed via <https://childcareworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/CCDBG-Oklahoma-Snapshot.pdf>

<sup>18</sup> Call with Oklahoma Policy Institute, January 14, 2020.

<sup>19</sup> Rebecca Fine, “Expansion in Federal Funding is Improving Access and Quality in Oklahoma’s Child Care Subsidy Program,” June 19, 2019,

Oklahoma.<sup>20</sup> In order to address this challenge, policymakers hope to effectively leverage the increase in CCDBG funds to help grow and bolster the market and reduce the number of preschool deserts in the state. This indirect approach appears to be the largest effort to-date to expand capacity in Oklahoma.

Chart 7. Percentage of Population Living in Childcare Desert by State



In Tennessee, until 2016, childcare subsidy was only available to families enrolled in Families First, the state’s TANF program. In 2017, the state rolled out the Smart Steps program, which

Accessed via <https://okpolicy.org/expansion-in-federal-funding-is-improving-access-and-quality-in-oklahomas-child-care-subsidy-program/>

<sup>20</sup> Center for American Progress, “Child Care Deserts,” 2017, Accessed via <https://childcaresdeserts.org/index.html>

opened the program up to working families with household incomes below the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile of the State Median Income. Despite these policy changes, the program remains underutilized, based on the number of eligible children and the number of participants. As a result, the state is struggling to spend its CCDBG funds, which come with a “use it or lose it” provision. This has resulted in the state needing to return \$300 million to the federal government in unspent funds from the past five years.<sup>21</sup> There is certainly need for the program in the state (there are almost 300,000 children under age six potentially needing care in the state), but the state believes that it hasn’t managed to get funds into the hands of families due to a shortage of providers in the state. Other advocates argue that the under-enrollment is because the program was not actively promoted to eligible families.<sup>22</sup> Fully aware of how significant this issue is, the state is dedicating itself to rolling out a comprehensive marketing plan for families, and increasing reimbursement rates

in order to encourage more providers to participate in the program.

For a detailed comparison of these state childcare subsidy programs, please turn to table 5 in the appendix.

### Family and Workforce Support Programs

Colorado’s family and community support programs are all aligned around the goal of kindergarten readiness.<sup>23</sup> Individual programs are administered by local non-profits, but funding and data administration are managed by the Colorado Office of Early Childhood within the Department of Human Services. The state has a robust commitment towards home visiting programs, which are available to families in all 64 Colorado counties. Programs are either focused on health (Nurse Family Partnership) or empowering parents as educators (Home

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<sup>21</sup> Anita Wadhvani, “Tenn. Could now have \$1 billion in unspent funds for families, including \$300M for child care | Exclusive,” *Tennessean* (Nashville, TN), November 5, 2019, Accessed via <https://www.tennessean.com/story/news/2019/11/05/child-care-low-income-families-federal-funding-tennessee/4154580002/>

<sup>22</sup> Anita Wadhvani, “John Cooper, other mayors press governor, lawmakers to release child care funding,” *Tennessean* (Nashville, TN),

January 21, 2020, Accessed via <https://www.tennessean.com/story/news/2020/01/21/mayors-press-governor-bill-lee-release-child-care-millions-funding/4529713002/>

<sup>23</sup> Conversation with Colorado Early Childhood Leadership Commission, October 18, 2019

Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters and Parents as Teachers.)<sup>24</sup>



Unfortunately, there has been minimal action taken to address ECCE workforce recruitment and retention in Colorado, although it is acknowledged as one of the top concerns among policymakers. The state’s Early Childhood Councils (collaboratives that provide support and advocacy for childcare providers), have been working to convene working groups of childcare providers to brainstorm solutions to workforce challenges. That work is in its early stages with some funding earmarked for this challenge in the next round of PDG funding.

<sup>24</sup> Colorado Office of Early Childhood, Department of Human Services, “Family Support Programs,” Accessed via [http://coloradoofficeofearlychildhood.force.com/oec/OEC\\_Families?p=Family&s=Family-Support-Programs&lang=en](http://coloradoofficeofearlychildhood.force.com/oec/OEC_Families?p=Family&s=Family-Support-Programs&lang=en)

<sup>25</sup> Andy Chow, “Mike DeWine Proposes \$90M For Home Visitation Programs,” *Statehouse News Bureau* (Columbus, OH), March 8, 2019,

The state currently does not offer any statewide wage supplementation programs. There is, however, a robust Professional Development Information System, fully funded by the state, which gives early childhood educators access to educational resources, and allows the state to track trends related to the ECCE workforce at a state level.

Under the leadership of Governor Mike DeWine, Ohio is working to enhance its family and community support programs. One of DeWine’s first actions as governor was to commit funding and resources to home visiting for at-risk families. His goal is to triple the number of families served, from 4,000 to 12,000. He has formed an Advisory Committee on Home Visitation and has proposed increasing the budget from \$28.2 million to \$90 million.<sup>25</sup>

With regards to workforce support, local programs are stepping in where the state has been absent. For example, the Cincinnati Preschool Promise recently launched the Teacher Promise Grant program, offering up to \$2,000 annually in wage supplements for

Accessed via <https://www.statenews.org/post/mike-dewine-proposes-90m-home-visitation-programs>; Health Policy Institute of Ohio, “DeWine unveils plan to triple maternal home-visiting program,” January 18, 2019, Accessed via [https://www.healthpolicynews.org/daily\\_review/2019/01/dewine-unveils-plan-to-triple-maternal-home-visiting-program.html](https://www.healthpolicynews.org/daily_review/2019/01/dewine-unveils-plan-to-triple-maternal-home-visiting-program.html)

lead teachers, which are designed to address the low wages that plague the industry in Ohio.<sup>26</sup>

Due to the popularity and strength of UPK, most of Oklahoma’s resources go into keeping that program strong. However, the state does offer a variety of family engagement programs designed to help nonprofits and families keep children thriving, including Nurse-Family Partnership, Parents as Teachers, and Family Connects. While the state has strong standards around educational and wage levels for UPK teachers, it has been lagging on wages for early childhood educators in private childcare providers. In support of addressing this need, the state is using a portion of its 2018 CCDBG increase to provide stipends and scholarships for childcare workers looking to return to school or attain their Child Development Associate certificate.<sup>27</sup>

Knowing that workforce recruitment and retention is a nationwide problem in the ECCE arena, Tennessee recently invested in a statewide wage supplement program for early childhood educators. Tennessee is only the sixth state administer a statewide W.A.G.E.\$ program in order to help address the low wages that often plague the industry. The program was initially funded by the City of Chattanooga in a pilot and was expanded to

<sup>26</sup> Cincinnati Promise, “Preschool Teachers,” Accessed via <http://www.cincy-promise.org/teachers/>

cover the state by the Department of Human Services at the end of 2019. Salary supplements incentivize educational attainment, with awards ranging from \$400 to \$5,200 per year.<sup>28</sup>

Local Programs Overview

Colorado also has a decades-long history of supporting local ECCE programs that are generally designed to address the gaps that exist within the statewide



programs. These programs are funded at the local level, either through sales or property taxes – and have wider eligibility than the state-wide programs, which are primarily targeted towards lower income populations. Programs profiled in the following data tables include the Denver Preschool Program, Summit Pre-K, and the Breckenridge Childcare Tuition Assistance Program.

Much of the innovation and change with regards to ECCE service delivery and financing in Ohio is happening at the city and county level. Ohio has a variety of local programs that are working to address ECCE affordability and educational quality

<sup>27</sup> Fine, “Expansion in Federal Funding”

<sup>28</sup> Conversation with Tennessee Signals Center, November 13, 2019



within their jurisdictions. Two such programs are Cincinnati Preschool Promise and Montgomery-Dayton Preschool Promise, which serve the children of Cincinnati and the Dayton area respectively. Cuyahoga

County (Cleveland area) led the charge when it launched a Universal Preschool program in 2007. Their model relies on a blending of private and public dollars to offer 4,600 fully funded slots to the children who fall under 400% FPL in Cleveland and Cuyahoga County.<sup>29</sup>

For a detailed comparison of these local programs, please turn to tables 6 and 7 in the appendix.

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<sup>29</sup> Cuyahoga County, Ohio Office of the Executive, “Cuyahoga County’s Universal Pre-Kindergarten Program,” Accessed via <http://executive.cuyahogacounty.us/en-US/UPK-Program.aspx>

## IV. Recommendations

Based on the previous three sections of the report, MetrixIQ has strategic recommendations for the state of Nevada as it moves forward.

### 1. Improve ECCE data accessibility and consistency

To better grasp the full extent and scope of the child care landscape in Nevada, an improved data system is recommended. While constructing the analytical data file for the fiscal analyses, several data requests were submitted to produce a singular data file of child care providers.

Due to having incomplete data from the multiple sources – along with inconsistent data points across data sets – there were delays in processing and comprehending the data, as well as the potential for missing data that may be critical for further analyses.

Some examples of the challenges we encountered include:

- Different license numbers that refer to the same provider across datasets
- No complete data on public school programs serving preschool aged children – notably, there is a lack of capacity data in this instance

- Providers that would exist on one or two datasets, but then would be missing from other datasets of licensed and approved providers

Additionally, we learned from other states that a comprehensive data system is critical to tracking program progress, and that a lack of a comprehensive data system can be a tremendous frustration. Colorado, in particular, struggles with having fractured systems for tracking child level data with regard to state-wide programs. As a result, Colorado stakeholders encourage Nevada’s Department of Education Office of Early Learning and Development to consider allocating resources to creation of a comprehensive, state-wide data system.

It’s our understanding that the state of Nevada has started initial planning to develop an Early Childhood Integrated Data System. We encourage this work to continue, and for the Nevada Department of Education, Office of Early Learning and Development to find funding for this system, either through public or private dollars.

### 2. Reduce the Number of Child Care Deserts in Nevada

The largest discovery in our analysis was the fact that over 70% of Nevada’s population lives in a child care desert. A child care

desert is defined by the Center for American Progress as an area with fewer than one child care slot for every three children under age five. We determined that this is a problem that affects both urban and rural areas. We recommend using the accompanying Cost Estimation Tool in order to figure out which areas of the state are in the most need, and piloting programs designed to entice new providers into the market in those areas.

States such as Nevada, with significant metropolitan areas and large portions of non-populated regions, must exercise caution when addressing childcare deserts. In this case, strategies and efforts to address childcare deserts should fully consider the statewide context and the magnitude and extent of the problem within separate regions of the state. Simply focusing on large metropolitan regions – in order to mitigate statewide aggregate figures – ultimately creates false divisions and increases tensions commonly known as the rural-urban divide. Often, these divides are most visible during state and national elections – but the sentiments and lifestyle choices may run deep into local administrative issues.

It's our understanding that the Nevada Department of Education Office of Early Learning and Development has been developing a pilot for family provider start-up grants. We are glad to hear that the state has been brainstorming methods to address the

provider shortage in the state. Other states have been working to entice new providers into the market through quality improvement supports, educational stipends and scholarships for childcare workers, and wage supplement programs. Any of these programs could be carried out as targeted pilots with limited budgets in Nevada, either funded by state funds or philanthropic sources. We highly encourage the state of Nevada to get creative with ways to encourage new providers to enter the market.

### **3. Streamline funding and improve efficiencies**

During the stakeholder interview process and review of data on child care funding, it became clear that there were many systemic concerns regarding what were referred to as 'underserved populations.' During discussions with program leaders and other stakeholders, these populations consisted of largely three groups:

- Low income children and families
- Tribally affiliated children
- Children with special education needs or other developmental concerns

Service delivery to these populations could be improved with a more comprehensive 'wrap-around' style of care management. For example, a state contractor or employee could be responsible

for service delivery management and would visit specific child care facilities to identify comprehensive services needed. Aligning care in such a manner could reduce operational redundancies in the identification of eligible children for specialized service delivery.

#### **4. Consider a Diverse Set of Funding Sources**

Nevada's current landscape of childcare availability and service provision suggests there is insufficient funding to support the growth of childcare in several domains – such as overall capacity, provisions of resources to traditionally underserved populations, and the expansion of quality.

As the comparison states illustrate, it often takes a wide variety of revenue sources in order to fund ECCE programs within a state. As a smaller state, Nevada might consider models employed by Denver, CO and Cincinnati, OH, which are funded by a sales tax and a mill levy tax respectively.

At the statewide level, other states rely on a variety of different revenue sources to fund preschool and subsidy programs, including income tax, sales tax, casino settlements, and tax on investments. In our analysis, we learned that Nevada collects more per capita tax revenue than many other states (\$3018 for Nevada compared to Tennessee's \$2108, for example), and we

are hopeful that some of that tax revenue could be funneled into strengthening the state's ECCE systems.

Other states leverage the power of private dollars in order to make up for gaps in state funding. Tennessee, as an example, partners with a number of philanthropic organizations to fund pilot programs benefitting child care providers.

#### **5. Develop Private Support for Expanded ECCE initiatives**

Multiple comparison states highlight the importance of building private-public partnerships in order to further ECCE program goals. Multiple stakeholders in Oklahoma highlighted the importance of the business community's support for Universal Pre-K. Many believe it would not have passed were it not for the private support for the initiative. The state has seen continued success in leveraging private sector support for ECCE initiatives. The same community that supported the passage of UPK later focused efforts on increasing support for children ages birth to three.

Tennessee has taken a different approach to leveraging private sector support for statewide ECCE initiatives. The state's public-private partnerships have been critical in addressing funding gaps for ECCE programs. Currently, The Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee helps fund critical provider-facing programs for the state. Philanthropic dollars allow the state to

be innovative and test out smaller scale programs that might not otherwise be funded at the state level. Tennessee offers an interesting model for Nevada to consider as it moves forward.

**6. Invest in Nevada Silver State Stars**

Once the availability, affordability, and accessibility of child care has been addressed throughout the state, a targeted investment in the Nevada Silver State Stars QRIS would yield long-term benefits to the children enrolled in ECCE programs in the state. The first investment strategy would be to ensure a full and complete validation analysis is conducted. This study would address several factors of the QRIS, such as:

- Whether facilities of different rating levels sufficiently differ in terms of measurable quality
- Consistency of provider quality for sites with the same quality rating
- Sufficiency of quality improvement supports (coaching and direct material support) to make a meaningful difference for those who receive them
- Whether families understand the different quality levels and know what to expect from a provider with a high rating versus one without a rating

Should such a validation study be conducted and produce favorable results, establishing regional and statewide goals for home-based providers’ and center-based providers’ participation in the QRIS would be an ideal next step. These investment strategies would be aimed at ensuring every child lives in a part of the state where high quality early care and learning settings are available.

**7. When rolling out new ECCE programs, invest in provider and family engagement and communications campaigns**

Tennessee’s experience in expanding eligibility for its child care subsidy program offers a cautionary tale to any state looking to expand its ECCE service programming. Any new program must be carefully communicated both to providers and families, so that both stakeholder groups are ready for program launch. Tennessee struggled to communicate to both groups, which led to a slower-than-expected take-up rate for both. Ultimately, this led to Tennessee failing to spend its allotted CCDBG funds, requiring the state to return the unspent monies to the federal government. As Nevada works to design new programs that will help providers and/or families, we encourage the state to invest in a communications and engagement campaign to accompany program launch so that take-up goals are met and funds are spent effectively.

## APPENDIX

- I. Nevada stakeholder interview questions
- II. Appendix Table 1 – State Demographic Comparisons, by Number
- III. Appendix Table 2 – State Demographic Comparisons, by Percentage
- IV. Appendix Table 3 – Head Start Programs by State Overview
- V. Appendix Table 4 – State Preschool Programs Overview
- VI. Appendix Table 5 – State Subsidy Programs Overview
- VII. Appendix Table 6 – Local Colorado Programs Overview
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## I. Nevada ECCE Stakeholder Interview Questions

What have you seen change in the early care system(s) in Nevada?

When you think of childcare in Nevada, what first comes to mind?

Which individuals or roles in Nevada are the primary drivers for advancing early care and learning in Nevada?

What are the main challenges facing Nevada's \*children\* today? With regard specifically to childcare, what populations of children are underserved? Why do you think that is?

What are the main challenges facing the \*childcare providers\* in Nevada today?

If you could identify your top three issues related to childcare in Nevada, what would those issues be? Why do those issues exist and how should they be solved?

What is your understanding of the financial landscape of supports to providers in Nevada – how much money is available, and where does it go?

What policies or regulations have the greatest influence on how childcare providers deliver their services? This could be both positive and adverse.

In Nevada, can you identify any competing issues that prevent policy or legislative focus and funding from being directed into high quality childcare?

How do childcare providers become successful businesses? What is the role a state government can play in supporting that success?

What do you know about measures of quality in early care settings? How do you define quality?

II. Table 1 - State Demographic Comparison Table, By Number

BY RAW NUMBERS	Nevada		Colorado		Ohio		Oklahoma		Tennessee	
	Overall Population	Under 5 Population								
Population Size	2,887,725	181,207	5,436,519	334,250	11,609,756	695,704	3,896,251	265,113	6,597,381	402,578
Metropolitan Population	2,616,097	166,035	4,742,932	296,541	9,664,806	584,597	2,522,860	176,709	5,737,951	359,894
Rural Population	271,628	15,172	693,587	37,709	1,944,950	111,107	1,373,391	88,404	859,430	42,684
Number Living on Tribal Lands	32,426		51,406		21,872		289,871		17,568	
Number Living in Homelessness	7,544		10,857		10,249		3,871		7,883	
Per Capita Income	\$ 48,225		\$ 56,846		\$ 48,242		\$ 46,128		\$ 47,179	
Family Per Capita Income	\$ 28,450		\$ 34,845		\$ 29,011		\$ 26,461		\$ 27,277	
Median Income	\$ 55,434		\$ 65,458		\$ 52,407		\$ 49,767		\$ 48,708	
Number of People Living under 100% FPL	390,000		521,000		1,365,000		518,000		800,000	
Number of People Living under 200% FPL	916,000		1,277,000		3,424,000		1,240,000		2,058,000	
Number of Children Under Age 18	685,000		1,277,000		2,602,000		957,000		1,473,000	
Children Under 18 under 100% FPL	137,000		150,000		421,000		153,000		262,000	
Children Under 18 under 200% FPL	287,000		328,000		983,000		373,000		598,000	

III. Table 2 - State Demographic Comparison Table, By Percentage

BY PERCENTAGE	Nevada		Colorado		Ohio		Oklahoma		Tennessee	
	Overall Population	Under 5 Population								
Metropolitan Population	90.6%	91.6%	87.2%	88.7%	83.2%	84.0%	64.8%	66.7%	87.0%	89.4%
Rural Population	9.4%	8.4%	12.8%	11.3%	16.8%	16.0%	35.2%	33.3%	13.0%	10.6%
Number Living on Tribal Lands	1.1%		0.9%		0.2%		7.4%		0.3%	
Number Living in Homelessness	0.3%		0.2%		0.1%		0.1%		0.1%	
Number of People Living under 100% FPL	13.5%		9.6%		11.8%		13.3%		12.1%	
Number of People Living under 200% FPL	31.7%		23.5%		29.5%		31.8%		31.2%	
Number of Children Under Age 18	23.7%		23.5%		22.4%		24.6%		22.3%	
% of Children Under 18 Living Under 100% FPL	20%		12%		16%		16%		18%	
% of Children Under 18 Living Under 200% FPL	42%		26%		38%		39%		41%	

IV. Table 3 – Head Start Program by State Overview

State	Nevada	Colorado	Ohio	Oklahoma	Tennessee
<b>2018 Funded Head Start Slots*</b>	2,084	7,665	28,217	11,328	14,580
<b>2018 Funded Early Head Start Slots*</b>	870	1,740	5,679	2,751	2,269
<b>% of eligible children with access to HS**</b>	15%	62%	40%	46%	46%
<b>% Eligible children with access to EHS**</b>	5%	10%	12%	11%	8%
<b>2018 Funding</b>	\$ 38,247,816	\$ 103,819,522	\$ 341,431,136	\$ 119,170,464	\$ 161,868,221.00
<b>AIAN (American Indian and Alaska Native) Funding</b>	\$ 3,942,281	\$ 2,560,527	\$ -	\$ 29,724,208	\$ -
<b>AIAN Slots</b>	362	183	0	3,041	0

\* regional Head Start slots only, doesn't include Migrant Head Start or AIAN Head Start slots

\*\*Calculated by the National Head Start Association as cumulative enrollment for the year divided by number of children living in poverty in the state

V. Table 4 – State Preschool Program Overview

State	Nevada	Colorado	Ohio	Oklahoma	Tennessee
<b>Program Name</b>	Nevada Ready! Pre-K Program, Zoom and Victory Schools	Colorado Preschool Program and Early Childhood At-Risk Enhancement (ECARE)	Ohio Public Preschool Program	Universal Pre-K	Voluntary Pre-K
<b>Eligibility Criteria</b>	Families must fall under 200% FPL. Homeless, English language learners, and special education eligible kids are given priority. Zoom is specific for English Language Learners	4-Year-Olds who meet one risk factor for school readiness; 3-year-olds who meet three risk factors for school readiness; Children under 185% FPL is primary risk factor.	4-year-olds under 200% FPL; students who are disabled or in foster care. Unused slots as of Oct. 1 can be given to 3-year-olds.	All 4-Year Olds	3- and 4-year-olds under 185% of FPL. Priority given to students in low-income households, homeless students, and children in foster care
<b>2018 Federally Funded Enrollment</b>	2,171	21,446	17,913	39,807	18,354
<b>Special Ed Enrollment (3- and 4-year-olds)</b>	5,126	8,516	15,246	4,857	7,233
<b>Participation Rate Amongst 3- and 4-year-olds</b>	6%	31%	12%	74%	22%
<b>Annual Budget</b>	\$ 19,700,000	\$ 111,245,923	\$ 71,652,000	\$ 145,038,018	\$ 85,062,422
<b>\$ spent per child enrolled</b>	\$ 4,025	\$ 2,535	\$ 4,001	\$ 3,644	\$ 4,635
<b>Funding Mechanism</b>	Federally (PDG) and state funded.	General education revenue	General revenue funds and casino settlement funds.	General education funds; some districts use their Title I dollars to help pay for pre-K.	General education revenue; lottery revenue; federal TANF funds.
<b>Quality Requirement for Participating Providers</b>	Public and private providers must participate in Silver State Stars QRIS to participate in Nevada Ready!	Public and private providers must participate in Colorado Shines, state QRIS	Both public and private providers must have 3, 4, or 5 stars in the state QRIS	UPK schools are held to high quality standards separate from Reaching for the Stars, the state QRIS	Private providers must be rated 3-stars or higher in The state QRIS. Public providers do not participate in the QRIS.

VI. Table 5 – State Childcare Subsidy Program Overview

State	Nevada	Colorado	Ohio	Oklahoma	Tennessee
<b>Program name</b>	Nevada Child Care Subsidy Program	Colorado Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP)	Publicly Funded Child Care (PFCC)	Oklahoma Child Care Subsidy	Smart Steps Child Care Payment Assistance
<b>Eligibility Criteria</b>	Homeless, foster, TANF, low-income or Head Start eligible children; Family income can increase to 85% of State Median Income for continued eligibility	Income based on county-defined maximum (must cover families at 185% FPL or less); children under 13 years old; parent working, seeking employment or participating in education	Income must be below 130% FPL at outset, families can move up to 300% FPL before losing eligibility. Parents are working, seeking employment or participating in education.	Families at or below 85th percentile of state median income; parents are working or pursuing education.	Parents with income below 85th percentile of state median income; Teen parents; parents must be working or participating in training/education.
<b>Ages Served</b>	Birth through age 12; services for students in grades 1 through 12 are for before/after school services.	Birth to 13; children with disabilities up to 18	Birth to 13; children with disabilities up to 18	Birth through age 12	6 weeks to Kindergarten
<b>Average Monthly Number of Children served</b>	8,800	20,400	50,300	27,700	22,400
<b>Percent of Eligible Children Served (2016)*</b>	7.8%	12.2%	16.2%	14.8%	8.7%
<b>Estimated Number of Eligible Children (2016)*</b>	84,781	187,039	293,896	158,532	230,488
<b>2019 Allocated Federal Funds**</b>	\$64,528,715	\$99,986,304	\$296,624,072	\$120,228,965	\$189,024,272
<b>2019 State Funds (MOE and Matching)**</b>	\$10,972,955	\$37,310,411	\$79,295,458	\$23,749,917	\$36,485,926
<b>State to Federal Funding Ratio</b>	17%	37%	27%	20%	19%
<b>Quality Requirement for Participating Providers</b>	Providers who receive subsidy must participate in the state QRIS; reimbursement is tiered based on quality rating	Site must be licensed, and participate in state QRIS (Colorado Shines); or may have received exemption; reimbursement is tiered based on quality rating.	Starting in 2020, all programs that receive PFCC will need to participate in PFCC. Reimbursement rates are tiered based on quality rating of school.	Providers must be licensed, and participate in state QRIS. Reimbursement is tiered based on quality rating of site.	Providers must be licensed; reimbursement is tiered based on quality rating of site.

\*Number of all eligible children, not just birth to 5

\*\*Funds are for all served age groups, not just birth to 5

VII. Table 6 – Local Colorado Program Overview

Colorado Programs			
<b>Program</b>	Denver Preschool Program	Summit PreK	Breckenridge Child Care Tuition Assistance Program
<b>Municipality</b>	Denver, CO	Summit County, CO	Breckenridge, CO
<b>Eligibility Criteria</b>	Denver Resident; 4-years-old or in final year of preschool before kindergarten; attending participating school	Parents must live and/or work in Summit County; 4-years-old or in final year of preschool before kindergarten; attending participating school	Children ages birth through 6 who are members of working families who earn less than 150% of the Area Median Income, work and/or live in Upper Blue Basin, and attend one of the four non-profit Child Care Assistance in Breckenridge.
<b>Annual Number of Participants</b>	5000	225	140
<b>Annual Budget</b>	\$20,000,000	\$2,500,000	\$1,358,000
<b>Funding Mechanism</b>	0.15% sales tax in Denver County	Property tax	Property tax - \$131 for every \$1 M in residential property value, and \$479 for every \$1M in commercial property value
<b>Quality Requirement for Participating Providers</b>	Providers must participate in the state QRIS, Colorado Shines. Tuition reimbursement rates are tiered depending on the quality level of the provider.	Providers must have a state QRIS rating of 2 (out of 5) or higher. Tuition reimbursement rates are tiered based on quality rating of program.	There are only four participating providers, which range in ratings from 1 to 4 (out of 5) for the state QRIS.

VIII. Table 7 – Local Ohio Program Overview

Ohio Programs			
<b>Program</b>	Cincinnati Preschool Promise	Montgomery County Preschool Promise	Cuyahoga Universal Pre-K
<b>Municipality</b>	Cincinnati, OH	Montgomery County (Dayton), OH	Cuyahoga County (Cleveland), OH
<b>Eligibility Criteria</b>	Cincinnati Public Schools District resident; 3- and 4-year-olds; Under 300% FPL	4-year-olds in Montgomery County, OH	All Cuyahoga County 3- and 4-year-olds; although priority is given to those under 300% FPL.
<b>Annual Number of Participants</b>	950	1800	4649
<b>Annual Budget</b>	\$14,226,946	\$4,300,000	\$9,200,000
<b>Funding Mechanism</b>	Property tax mill levy	0.25% of city income tax	County level general funds and private philanthropic dollars
<b>Quality Requirement for Participating Providers</b>	Providers who are rated 0 through 2 stars are eligible to receive quality improvement support, providers who receive tuition support for students must have a 3-, 4-, or 5-star rating through the state QRIS. Tuition assistance is not tiered based on provider rating.	Providers must participate in the state QRIS, and reimbursement rates are tiered based on site rating.	Participating programs are rated 3-stars or higher in the state QRIS

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