

Vital Communities ECE Initiative

Workforce and Program Models Workgroup

Monday, June 19, 2023

12:30-2:00 pm

Join Zoom Meeting

https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88144914668?pwd=VkJXWjQ3bVhhVUZLeFB2N2Z0YzRyUT09

Meeting ID: 881 4491 4668

Passcode: 383671

Vital Communities Early Childhood Initiative

North Star: The goal of the Early Childhood Education Initiative is to facilitate an increase in high-quality, accessible, and affordable early childhood education in the bi-state Upper Valley area.

Agenda

- Introductions and Icebreaker
- Jackie Cowell- An update from ELNH
- Finalize goals for July-September
- Other Business

Next meeting: Monday, July 17, 2023, 12:30 pm

Meeting Notes

In Attendance
Julie McConnell
Joanne Roberts
Amy Brooks
Shaun Mulholland
Katie Brissette
Jackie Cowell

Jackie Cowell- An update from ELNH

- Statewide nonprofit that has been around for 20 years
- Providien Bank helped formed ELNH and funded them for the first couple of years
- Formed to: support the field of ECE Programs and families they serve as well as advocacy
- They were the fiscal sponsor of SPARK NH for 10 years
- Turned their attention to childcare, especially during the pandemic
- SELA (State Early Learning Alliance) formed in 2011
    - All United Way funded
    - How can you leverage each other's assets and strengths to lower operating costs and provide better benefits to staff?
    - It has been highly successful when it is used
    - Partnered with the NH Community Loan Fund
    - This is not meant to be one more thing on their plate
        - SELA Navigators: one-on-one people helping providers navigate the process
        - Want this to supplement the work that is already being done in the Upper Valley
        - Haven't met an averaged-sized program that hasn't saved over $10,000 a year using SELA
        - Food program ties into CACFP

- ELNH + other orgs, spends an hour from 8:30-9:30AM every Wednesday talking about ECE strategies
    - Everyone is welcome to come to these weekly meetings
    - Providers are there to give their perspectives
    - How to replicate LGK in New Hampshire?
- Twice monthly conversations with childcare providers
    - They tell us what they need
- Do you have to pay for SELA?
    - Free tools, etc. on the website
    - SELA Premium: deep discounts for utilities, families can get discounts on insurances, etc.
- How to let people know scholarships are available?
    - It will take time
    - Leb will partner with UVBA to make a video to push out of how to use these resources

- Council for Thriving Children's strategic plan: Joanne should mention that to DOE when she meets with them in early July

Finalized goals for July-September

- See below notes from previous meetings
- These were all approved

North Star (Draft)

Workforce and Program Models North Star:

- Identify, develop, and evaluate strategies that promote bi-state sustainability supporting the retention and recruitment of early childhood educators.

Action Steps and Metrics:

1. Build public awareness of ECE as a profession
    - 1) What did we do and how much of it did we do? (numbers)
        - Working with Advocacy to attend/particpate in a meaningful way with legislation
        - Fall and spring events (WOYC)

        - Podcasts -Advocacy -formal messaging campaign “The bedrock of the granite state”
        - ECE-shared services and programs ELNH come to a WF meeting; including food discounts; grant funding; ‘acquire for hire’; telehealth; plan for the fall
    - 2) How well did we do it? (usually in percentages) and
    - 3) Is anybody better off because of it? (who?)

2. Connect early childhood educators to networks providing business-related technical assistance and capital access to optimize their business operations, lower operation costs, and increase their capacity
    - 1) What did we do and how much of it did we do? (numbers)
        - RFP DHHS- Childcare business improvement
        - NHLI
        - NH Community Loan Fund- ECE program
        - VT Community Loan Fund
        - USDA low interest loans– put together a comprehensive list
        - Building Bright Funds hubs (Courtney Hillhouse could update)
    - 2) How well did we do it? (usually in percentages) and
    - 3) Is anybody better off because of it? (who?)

3. Identify and support opportunities for cooperative procurement of services
    - 1) What did we do and how much of it did we do? (numbers)
        - Food support-creative ideas and solutions

        - Electricity, insurance, supplies, shared HR, IT (CCA Global), administrative supports–National work Opportunities Exchange; NHLI; Louise Stoney-ECE shared services platform– Providers might not be ready for this yet. Shared education and knowledge for a potential future conversation. Proactive. More accessible for new centers
    - 2) How well did we do it? (usually in percentages) and
    - 3) Is anybody better off because of it? (who?)

4. Identify means to decrease start up costs for new ECE professionals (home-based and centers)
    - 1) What did we do and how much of it did we do? (numbers)
        - Business incubator- resources and information; funding resources, capital
        - Guide for new startups for new centers-manual for VT and NH
        - Bringing It Home Project- collaborate to accelerate the pace for our regions; share models
        - (Let's Grow Kid: ECEA UV Home-Grown Effort- match funding for home-based VT and NH); Centers; VT Business Hub; NH regional)
            - Licensing
            - Funding is a barrier
            - Director role is lacking
            - 85% capacity to be profitable
            - NH Loan Fund-model CDFI Community Development Financial Institutions-mission based lenders focus on ECE; National network of these organizations-Draw on this expertise

        - Community Loan Fund- VT and NH resources
        - Wonderschool- VT/NH-licensing, policies, tuition cost, business model, collections, HR/family boundaries
        - Access to minigrants for start-up costs
    - 2) How well did we do it? (usually in percentages) and
    - 3) Is anybody better off because of it? (who?)

5. ECEA information for VT and NH ECE professionals shared with VC website

    - 1) What did we do and how much of it did we do? (numbers)
    - 2) How well did we do it? (usually in percentages) and
    - 3) Is anybody better off because of it? (who?)

6. Inform the Advocacy Committee of opportunities to support ECE efforts particularly in regard to VT Child Care and NH bills including SB 221. Connect with Senator Prentiss and other influencers.

    - 1) What did we do and how much of it did we do? (numbers)
    - 2) How well did we do it? (usually in percentages) and
    - 3) Is anybody better off because of it? (who?)

- Cindy Warmington, Executive Counselor Democratic Candidate (August)
    - Understand our concerns

****

Former Strategic Goals (Blue text is progress to date as discussed in the last meeting)
Staff Retention and Recruitment Strategic Goals

1) **Developing the Early Education Workforce**
    a) Identify and support organizations and funding sources to develop a robust pipeline of new early childhood educators i.e., ECEA, Tech Centers, colleges, and middle/high schools. (Apprenticeships, mentorships, etc.)

We have made great strides in this area
-ECEA training program in Lebanon; expansion to Claremont and Henniker in Winter 2023
-HACTC conversation with ECEA and Lebanon High School (Potential opportunity down the line for HACTC to offer a program/collaboration with Lebanon ECE where students earn credits/credentials during the day and HACTC Adult program in the evening.
-ECEA submitted RFP
-Conversation with Dartmouth College and Dartmouth-Health

    b) Update and maintain a bi-state inventory documenting innovative strategies and funding promoting early education workforce retention and recruitment.

Document prepared by Alison Chisolm

    c) Bring these concepts to the Advocacy Committee

We are doing this.

2) **Promoting Fair Compensation and Benefits**
    a) Consult with subject matter experts. Share accurate data and identify gaps focused on fair and equitable early childhood educator compensation and benefits and the inequity of marginalized populations in the Upper Valley.

Great strides in this area:
-ECEA and Kim Votta have done research in this area
-Couch Foundation and UNH
-LGK Rand report
-Impact of new centers on staffing levels
-Wages subcommittee of the Advisory Childcare Council Legislative Council
-Council for Thriving Children Strategic Plan 2023–2025
Untapped workforce people not in the college pipeline
Categorical eligibility
- #1 barrier is access and cost of ECE for their own children

VT Early Child Care Education Legislation
S.56 2 An act relating to child care and early childhood education (Passed March 2023)
S.56 would increase access to quality child care services throughout Vermont, provide financial stability to child care programs, support and stabilize Vermont's child care workforce, address the workforce needs of Vermont employers. It would also create a Prekindergarten Education Study Committee to provide policy recommendations for how to improve and expand accessible, affordable and high-quality prekindergarten education.

NH

SB 466 (Passed June 2022)

This bill directs the department of health and human services, in consultation with the child care advisory council, to submit a plan to the governor, the speaker of the house, the senate president, and the governor's office for economic relief and recovery relative to fostering sustainable childcare opportunities within the state.

The Child Care for New Hampshire Working Families Act SB 237 (Pending Motion)

This bill modifies the child care scholarship program, establishes a child care workforce program and a regional fingerprinting support program, and makes appropriations for these programs, and for child caregiver supports, early childhood mental health support, and for early childhood education scholarships.

b) Develop an inventory of Upper Valley compensation and benefits in other business sectors with similar or less pre-employment requirements.

VTAEYC have been working on what a wage scale/career ladder might look like compared to other fields- Reach out to Sharon Harrington to join one of our meetings to make sure we are all on the same page with this topic; Emilie T. would know where to find data.

Joanne emailed Sharron H.

c) Identify strategies to retain qualified educators

- Part of the ECEA training program
- NH 221- Senator Prentiss–August/September come to a meeting; testify at legislative meetings
- Involve Advocacy committee members

d) Bring these concepts to the Advocacy Committee
We've been bringing these concepts to the Advocacy Workgroup.

Facilities and Program Models Strategic Goals

- Facilitate the development of an integrated network of business support organizations that can provide the necessary business-related technical assistance to existing providers to support early childhood educators to increase capacity, maximize revenue, and capture operating efficiencies.

- Joanne attended UVBA meeting and talked about the dire need for ECE
- Assistance with grant writing-proposal to assist Directors
- ECEA training program
- GOFFER-$3M not sure where it is going
- Early Learning NH can provide support through the DHHS RFP if they get that funding; coordinate and align with the work of ECEA
- Dartmouth College & Dartmouth Health ECE proposed projects (Six Areas)
    - 1. Workforce
    - 2. Leadership Training
    - 3. Expand/renovate current center-based facilities
    - 4. Enable smaller center-based and home-based programs to thrive
    - 5. State Advocacy

- Develop a list of Vermont and NH grants and/or low-cost loans available for facility improvements and expansions. Add to the Vital Communities ECE Initiative website, ECEA, and other websites so the information is readily available.

ECEA has this information. Do not know if there is a shared link with VC.

- It would be great to have one person who can be the 'go-to contact'; walk them through what they want, potential resources, what you can spend it on regarding facilities
- For many centers, their books might not be in order as well as they would like them to be
    - We had a person from Mascoma Bank attend the earlier sessions who said they would be willing to assist with that. We could loop them back in.
- Include NH and VT Community Loan funds have targeted capacity to do ECE lending with greater flexibility than banks

- The document the ECEA ended up with is program support so that would have to be a separate document

- Locate a contractor who can provide estimates for facility improvements to use as a resource.

We did look into this, but people were not ready to have site visits
    - On hold.

- Develop a rubric to score applications for the City of Lebanon ECE concept

  Complete

- Bring these concepts to the Advocacy Committee

  Complete

In Attendance
Anna Hubbard
Lori Brown
Amy Brooks
Shaun Mulholland
Julie McConnell
Faye Grearson
Jessie Ratey
Joanne Roberts
Katie Jenks
Sunnie McPhetres
Damian DiNicola