State/Territory: New Mexico

Submission Date: December 20, 2019

Determination:

☒ Needs Assessment has been accepted

☐ Additional information is required from the grantee to address the area(s) identified by the reviewers below, prior to acceptance.

Feedback and Next Steps:

Executive Summary
- Notes: The grantee provides an introduction and overview of the Needs Assessment process, a crosswalk of the Needs Assessment Domains, and appendices with additional supporting information.
- Next Steps: No additional steps are needed

Process Methodology
- Notes: Substantial data was collected through multiple strategies that are described in detail within the assessment. NM included data and environmental scans, surveys and focus groups and interviews, conducted for varied stakeholder groups and in multiple languages. The appendices provide a comprehensive summary of the participants, methodologies, information sought and the analysis of gathered information.
- Next Steps: No additional steps are needed

Definitions
- Notes: The grantee provides definitions for Quality Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE), ECCE Availability, Vulnerable or Underserved Children, including Child Welfare cases, children with special health care needs, developmental delays and disabilities, dual language learners, grandparents raising children and kinship care households, homeless households, immigrants, children impacted by substance abuse, infant and early childhood mental health, low income households, neonatal intensive care unit and teen parents.
- Next Steps: No additional steps are needed

Focal Populations
- Notes: NM breaks out its vulnerable population in to 10 regions. NM included a chart of selected conversations completed with focus populations according to group represented and number of participants. Appendix E included a list of themes from each focused conversation. Demographic charts for each of the 10 regions are embedded throughout this section of the narrative and in the appendices and, in addition to providing data on vulnerable populations, further break out, on a county level, the data and analysis of rural areas.
- Next Steps: No additional steps are needed
Children Being Served and Awaiting Service

- Notes: The grantee has provided a chart and graphics identifying the types of early care and education programs used by families; by vulnerability within all 10 Regions including estimates of the need, children being served, children awaiting services and the current percentage of need currently met.
- Next Steps: No additional steps are needed

Quality and Availability

- Notes: The grantee discussed how they can and should improve early childhood program quality and access. This theme ran across all geographies, socio-economic categories, political parties, backgrounds, languages, abilities, and other groupings.
- Next Steps: No additional steps are needed

Gaps in data or research to support collaboration between programs/services and maximize parental choice

- Notes: The Improvement of Data was noted as one of the areas of need reported by stakeholders in the Early Learning System. Although much of the necessary data is available in multiple locations and at multiple levels within the system, it is not unified nor is it used widely for planning or quality improvement purposes. Mechanisms to connect information gathered are needed so data can be viewed, analyzed and used. NM states that this has been the promise of the Early Childhood Integrated Data System (ECIDS), which has been in the works for nearly seven years, though is still not operational. More strategies for data system improvements will be detailed in the Early Learning Strategic Plan for New Mexico.
- Next Steps: No additional steps are needed

Quality and Availability of Programs and Supports

- Notes: An analysis of ten regional groups (some comprised of multiple counties) was included and sheds light on the availability of and need for early childhood services in each area. NM discussed in great detail programs directed towards quality and access, one of their largest being the FIT Program. The Fit Program offers supports and services to families through a network of early intervention provider agencies across New Mexico.
- Next Steps: No additional steps are needed

Measurable Indicators

- Notes: The Grantee has outlined a plan of building the capacity for quality in the system by supporting provider efforts to improve their quality ratings under FOCUS. (Additional information about FOCUS and quality ratings was included Appendix A: Definitions.) There was also agreement that funding must be at least sufficient to support all currently eligible children at the highest levels of quality. A chart including quantitative data was included.
- Next Steps: No additional steps are needed

Issues involving ECCE facilities

- Notes: The grantees identified the need to improve existing early childhood infrastructure and to build new classrooms, centers, and schools to accommodate an increase in programming across tribal communities, and rural communities, especially the need for more culturally relevant, high-quality programs in tribal communities which would, in turn, help increase demand for these programs.
- Next Steps: No additional steps are needed

Funding barriers and opportunities for more efficient use of resources

- Notes: The grantee provides data, both qualitative and quantitative, on the existing socio-economic conditions, as well as on the funding barriers for each of the 10 regional groups.
Areas that present challenges include childcare subsidy vs cost for families vs co-payments, early childhood development workforce salaries and economic policies related to childcare funding.

- Next Steps: No additional steps are needed

Transition supports and gaps

- Notes: The need for supported transitions across early childhood was widely identified throughout the NA. Focus areas included transitions for children moving between programs and into schools, and better support for families whose children have special needs and different abilities. NM also discussed a pilot program within one of their communities where they are working together on a local approach to support parents and their children in the transition to public schools. The group who supports this includes professionals from childcare centers, Head Start programs, public schools, charter schools, and University of New Mexico’s Center for Development and Disability (UNMCDD).
- Next Steps: No additional steps are needed

System integration and interagency collaboration

- Notes: Throughout the Needs Assessment, the Grantee demonstrates a strong integrated system of services and interagency collaboration with all providers. There is also a strong support for the integration of education and health systems across the state’s infrastructure for NM’s youth and families.
- Next Steps: No additional steps are needed

Stakeholder Input

- Notes: The themes for New Mexico’s 2019 Needs Assessment were developed through deep community engagement and listening. The grantee provides a wealth of evidence of stakeholder input from a variety of agencies and organizations, as well as from parents and families. 1,337 people were directly engaged in community conversations and interviews; In addition, 1,290 people responded to a workforce survey; there were 819 responses to a family survey; 27 different New Mexico plans were analyzed and reviewed and 72 county indicators were analyzed. The grantee breaks out themes for the community conversations in Appendix D; a list of attendees for the conversations in Appendix E; and a summary of the themes resulting from the informal interviews with political leaders, notable experts, and leaders in early childhood in Appendix F. See Appendix G for a Crosswalk and Synthesis of Early Childhood Reports in New Mexico.
- Next Steps: No additional steps are needed