

Strengthening Montana's Early Childhood System Project

Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five Grant:
Project Updates

Findings &
recommendations

Activity 1: Needs Assessment

Needs assessment structure

- **Access:** ECE capacity for all children, with focus on underserved/vulnerable populations and regions
- **Quality:** QRIS and licensing
- **Workforce:** Professional development
- **Coordination:** Screening, family navigation, social determinants of health referrals, provider coordination, transitions (kindergarten and others), and data
- **Family Engagement:** Definition, implementation, implicit bias
- **Commitment:** Public understanding and investment in early childhood
- **Governance:** Structure, policy, funding

Status, next steps

Activity 2: Strategic planning

Strategic planning

- Conducted regional workshops in Missoula, Billings, Helena, Great Falls, and Bozeman
- Held targeted conversations: tribal consultation and school transitions
- Consolidated feedback and presented to DPHHS
- Held planning session 7/22
- Plan will outline request for subsequent grant funding
- Planned submission on August 9th

Strategic planning – DRAFT focal areas

1. **Access and quality.** Access to and participation in high quality ECE across a mixed delivery system.
2. **Workforce.** Effective early childhood workforce (may combine with quality)
3. **Coordination.** System coordinated to support effective family assessment, system navigation, care coordination, and use of data.
4. **Engagement.** Families engaged and valued.
5. **Commitment.** Communities make early childhood a priority, and act to support children's health, learning, and well-being.
6. **Governance.** System is structured to support policy alignment, strategic financing, continuous improvement, and accountability.

Status, next steps

Activity 3: Family engagement

Family engagement

- Operationalization of family engagement definition – ongoing, broader scope.
- Contracted with parentingmontana.org to extend infrastructure to include 0-4 year olds.
- Contracted with Head Start to conduct professional development on family engagement.
- Begun work on ECE portal within DPHHS to centralize and improve delivery of state-based data.
- Six family engagement coordinators hired through early childhood community coalitions.
- Contracted with CCRR Network to lead marketing work.
- Resource and referral process improvements will begin to be defined.
- The state will define how to extend use of ASQ/ASQ-SE.

Status, next steps

Activity 4: ECE professional development

Professional development

- Hired a coaching specialist to support definition of coaching competencies and credentials; work ongoing.
- CCRR agencies have begun work to develop learning communities as well as targeted supports for home-based child care providers.
- Needs assessment and strategic planning include a significant focus on the need for mental health consultation expansion. The state will begin work to scale/increase infant early childhood mental health consultation.
- Tribal consultation included a focus on developing cultural competency training. Work with 7 Montana tribes is continuing to define cultural competency materials. Work will incorporate other early childhood stakeholders to include broader expertise/experience.

Status, next steps

Activity 5: ECE quality improvement

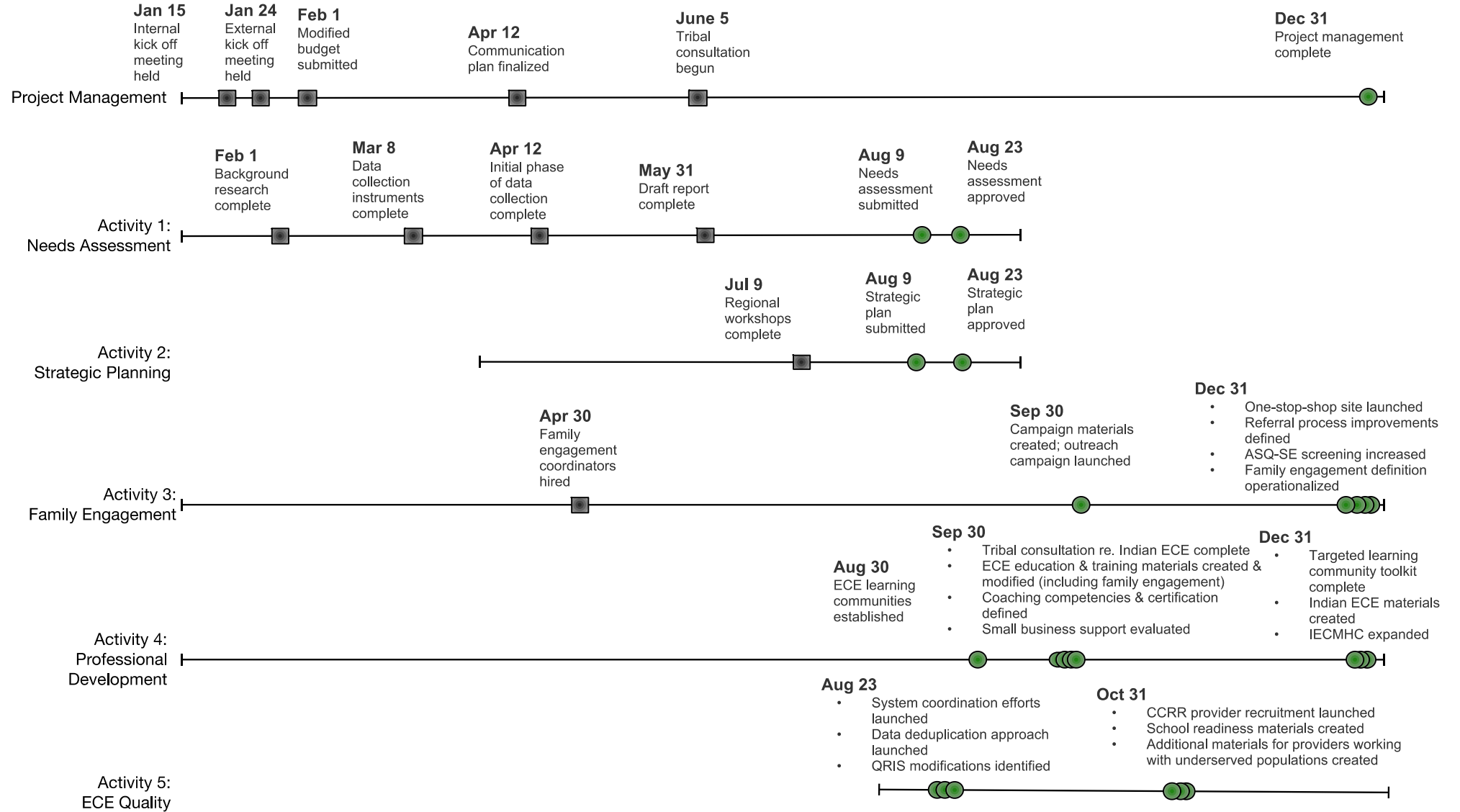
Quality improvement

- Work related to determining approach to de-duplicate data to uniquely identify children and families progressed and will continue.
- Local coalitions are connecting to school districts to understand and better define local kindergarten transition processes. Strategic planning work will guide next steps regarding kindergarten transition work.
- Decisions regarding QRIS will be made based on the needs assessment, strategic planning, and national technical assistance.

Updated July 23

Timeline

January February March April May June July August September October November December



Project timeline

Status, next steps

Next grant opportunity

Notice of funding opportunity

- PDG B-5 Renewal Grant
- HHS-2019-ACF-OCC-TP-1567
- Estimated post date: September 1, 2019
- Estimated due date: October 31, 2019
- Expected awards: 23
- \$5 - \$15 million/annually

Questions

<https://dphhs.mt.gov/hcsd/ChildCare/montanaearlychildhoodsystem>