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**Early Childhood Education Leaders**

**Communities of Learning for Inclusive Programs**

**September, 2019**

**Application Package**

**Virginia Department of Education**

**Division of School Readiness**

**Office of Early Childhood**

**APPLICATION SUBMISSION DEADLINE:**

**November 15, 2019**

**Submission of Grant Application:** In order to be considered for selection, applicants must submit all required information with complete responses. The application must be emailed to Laura.Heath@doe.virginia.gov **no later than 4 p.m. on November 15, 2019.**



# Early Childhood Education Leaders

# Communities of Learning for Inclusive Programs

## Purpose

The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) will offer the Early Childhood Education Leaders Communities of Learning for Inclusive Programs. The purpose of the Communities of Learning (CoL) is to deliver technical assistance and professional development to leaders in early childhood who want to explore how to build high-quality early childhood inclusive programs. Building or expanding inclusive programs for young children with Individualized Education programs (IEPs) requires a systems change process that is comprehensive and includes an examination of the educational system components that support early childhood education in the school and community. Divisions participating in the CoL will be guided through the initial stage of systems change - exploration. Through exploration, divisions will acquire information about EC and inclusive models, identify requirements for implementation of inclusive programs, carefully assess potential barriers, determine whether implementation is feasible, and if so, prepare and mobilize the division, staff, and resources.

For systems change to be successful, exploration must occur before moving to implementation. Therefore, the CoL is designed for divisions that are in the early stages of building or expanding inclusive programs and need more information about models of inclusion, the division’s precise needs, approaches that will fit the division’s needs, and may not yet be fully ready to implement changes to EC programs.

## Background

An investment in early childhood is one of the best investments society can make. Because of the importance of the early years of life, Virginia created a plan to improve the quality of early childhood care and education programs across the Commonwealth. The plan focuses on providing children with high-quality preschool experiences that help prepare them for kindergarten and enable them to thrive.

A goal of the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) is to expand accessibility of quality early childhood care and education programs. As such, VDOE is focused on providing support to divisions to ensure more children with IEPs are served in inclusionary settings. High-quality inclusive preschool programs can help produce long-term success, characterized by higher productivity in adulthood and fewer resources spent on interventions and public assistance later in life.

Unfortunately, Virginia’s public classrooms currently include children with IEPs at a much lower rate than the national average 34% of children with IEPs, compared to 46% nationally. Inclusion in early childhood programs is supported through years of research and reinforced by a strong legal foundation. The CoL is designed to assist Virginia’s school divisions and early childhood communities in identifying, developing, and sustaining inclusive early childhood programs for children with IEPs ages two-, three-, and four-years old.

Communities of Learning for Inclusive Programs Description

The CoL will run from January, 2020 through July, 2020. An online CoL session will be held from 3:00-4:30 one time per month. In addition to the online CoL sessions, a live Summer Institute will be provided in July.

Jaye Harvey, Ed.D., State Coordinator for the Virginia Cross-Sector Professional Development (VCPD) team will lead participants through *The Preschool Inclusion Toolbox: How to Build and Lead a High-Quality Program.* This comprehensive resource provides a structured process for addressing systems-level change and improving inclusive practices. Specifically, participants will:

* Describe the legal requirements of inclusion;
* Describe contexts for inclusion in early childhood;
* Describe factors that lead to high-quality inclusive early childhood programs;
* Examine division data related to inclusion of young children with IEPs;
* Develop a precision statement that provides a data-based description of the division’s current status regarding inclusive early childhood programs;
* Identify key challenges to implementing inclusive programs in the division;
* Identify and engage critical team members who can support inclusive programs;
* Describe successful division and program strategies, including service delivery models and funding mechanisms;
* Develop a vision statement;
* Develop 2-3 division goals to increase inclusive early childhood programs;
* Engage in peer-to-peer discussions about high-quality inclusive programs.

At the conclusion of the CoL, divisions can consider if they would like to receive support in achieving their identified goals by applying for long-term, intensive technical assistance through the VDOE’s Training and Technical Assistance Centers (TTACs). Applications for intensive technical assistance will be available in fall 2020 and accepted divisions will begin receiving ITA in January 2021.

## Responsibilities

* **School Division Responsibilities**

The CoL requires the school division to:

* Obtain administrative support and commitment,
* Form a CoL team to participate in exploration activities,
* Identify a person to serve as the team lead to fulfill logistical responsibilities associated with the role as well as provide group leadership,
* Attend all monthly CoL sessions online,
* Attend the live CoL summer institute,
* Hold at least monthly scheduled team meetings,
* Develop a vision statement and goals targeted to increasing inclusive EC programs, and
* Complete other activities as assigned.
	+ **CoL Team**

Forming a CoL team is a requirement if your application is accepted. Prior to submitting an application for the CoL, identify individuals who are committed members of the team. Additionally, identify an individual to be the team lead and serve as liaison to the CoL leader as well as the division director or superintendent. The team at a minimum, should consist of:

* + - an administrator who can commit to the process of expanding and sustaining inclusive opportunities (this includes a person who has policy and funding knowledge and authority)
		- a school division leader who acts as the program administrator for ECSE programs, and
		- a school division or local agency leader who acts as the program coordinator for Early Childhood (e.g., Virginia Preschool Initiative, Head Start, Title I).

Others who may be considered as team members include:

* + - a program leader who acts as the Disabilities Specialist for the Head Start program;
		- a community-based child care or preschool provider,
		- community partners,
		- principals/assistant principals,
		- early childhood and early childhood special education teachers,
		- related service providers,
		- family members, and
		- any other people who could be affected by the change to the system or may be able to support problem solving and/or future implementation (e.g., representatives of the transportation department).

Once the CoL begins, the team membership may change based on needs identified to ensure membership of those who may contribute to exploring the development or expansion of inclusive EC programs.

* **VDOE Responsibility**

The VDOE will provide technical assistance at the division or program level by:

* Providing monthly online CoL sessions;
* Providing a one-day live summer institute at a date to be determined;
* Providing copies of *The Preschool Inclusion Toolbox: How to Build and Lead a High-Quality Program;*
* Providing copies of the *Virginia Guidelines for Early Childhood Inclusion;*
* Providing resources and information on inclusive practices;
* Assisting teams in analyzing data related to EC inclusion;
* Assisting teams in exploring requirements for implementation of inclusive programs, carefully assessing potential barriers, and determining whether implementation is feasible.

Communities of Learning for Inclusive Programs General Information

## Eligibility

All school divisions are eligible to apply. Applicants must show evidence of commitment from division leadership, including the superintendent.

## Competitive Priority Ranking

Completed applications submitted by the deadline will be reviewed by VDOE and T/TAC staff and ranked in order using the following for priority ranking.

* Commitment to provide a team to work together (for team membership requirements, see page 3).
* Identification of 2 SMART (specific, measurable, ambitious, realistic and time-based) goals that are clear.
* Consideration of the division need as indicated by the Indicator 6, Early Childhood Educational Placement data
	+ Percentage of students who attend a regular early childhood program and receive the majority of their special education and related services there.
	+ Percentage of children who attend a separate classroom, school, or residential facility.
	+ Completeness of the application.

## Notification

The individual serving as the CoL application contact for the division will be notified via email as to the final status of the application (i.e., accepted, not accepted) once a decision is made in December, 2019. School division superintendents of divisions accepted will also be notified.

## Webinar Dates/Times

All interested school divisions are strongly encouraged to have the application contact attend the informational webinar. Additional information and technical assistance will be provided on the CoL application process and an opportunity for questions will be provided. The webinar will be recorded and a link to the recording will be sent to all ECSE Coordinators and will be available on request.

* Quality Grant Webinar: Thursday, October 10, 2019 from 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.

To join the Webinar

1. Go to <https://gmu.webex.com/gmu/k2/j.php?MTID=t75f4cb9f3448d6c3add3131dada0b313>
2. Enter your name and email address
3. Enter the session password: **MpuPF3Se**
4. Click "Join Now"
5. Follow the instructions that appear on your screen
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To join by phone only

US:+1-415-655-0003

Access code: 647 293 793

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# PART 1: COVER PAGE AND ASSURANCES

| School Division: | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| --- | --- |
| Name of Division Contact: | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| Title: | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| Address: | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| Email: | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| Telephone: | Click or tap here to enter text. |

## Statement of Assurances

Should a grant award be made to the applicant in support of activities proposed in this application, the authorized signature certifies to the Virginia Department of Education that the authorized official will:

1. Conduct the activities of this project in compliance with laws, regulations, and grant criteria;
2. Provide leadership and support for the division’s exploration of building or expanding inclusive programs in early childhood;
3. Form a planning and implementation team of division and community-based members;
4. Attend all online sessions and the live event;
5. Meet monthly, at a minimum;
6. Collaborate to complete exploration activities;
7. Complete evaluation activities as required; and
8. Submit by October 1, 2020 final documentation and data in the format requested, to the VDOE, outlining future goals and next steps.

**Certification Statement:**

I certify to the best of my knowledge that the information in this application is correct, that the filing of this application is duly authorized, and that this organization will comply with the Statement of Assurances.

| **Print Division Superintendent Name:** | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| --- | --- |
| **Email:** | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| **Signature:** |  |
| **Date**: | Click or tap here to enter text. |

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# PART 2: DIVISION INFORMATION

**School Division:** Click or tap here to enter text.

**Date:** Click or tap here to enter text.

**Team Leader (This is the person who will liaise with the CoL leader, provide team leadership, schedule meetings, and manage team logistics if the division is selected.)**

| **Name:** | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| --- | --- |
| **Position:** | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| **Address:** | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| **Office Phone:** | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| **Mobile Phone:** | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| **Email Address:** | Click or tap here to enter text. |

**Members who Agree to Serve on the CoL Planning Team:**

| **Name:** | **Position:** | **Agency:** |
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**DIVISION DATA**

1. As of December 1, 2018, how many children with IEPs in preschool did your division serve?
	1. Total: Click or tap here to enter text.
	2. Age 2: Click or tap here to enter text.
	3. Age 3: Click or tap here to enter text.
	4. Age 4: Click or tap here to enter text.
	5. Age 5: Click or tap here to enter text.
2. Please check the programs provided in your school division / community and indicate the number of classrooms for each program:

[ ]  ECSE self-contained Click or tap here to enter text.

[ ]  ECSE reverse-inclusion (includes typically developing children from the community) Click or tap here to enter text.

[ ]  Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI) – division is the grantee Click or tap here to enter text.

[ ]  Title I preschool Click or tap here to enter text.

[ ]  Locally funded preschool Click or tap here to enter text.

[ ]  Head Start – division is the grantee Click or tap here to enter text.

[ ]  Head Start - community agency is the grantee Click or tap here to enter text.

1. Check whether your community has the following:

[ ]  Community-Based Preschool

[ ]  Community-Based Child Care

**DIVISION BACKGROUND AND GOALS**

1. Describe any inclusive opportunities currently provided. Click or tap here to enter text.
2. Briefly describe why your division wants to participate in the CoL. Click or tap here to enter text.
3. The purpose of the CoL is exploration. Through exploration, divisions will acquire information about EC and inclusive models, identify requirements for implementation of inclusive programs, carefully assess potential barriers, determine whether implementation is feasible, and if so, prepare and mobilize the division, staff, and resources. Describe the anticipated impact your team hopes to achieve as a result of participating in the CoL by listing two specific SMART goals.

SMART goals are Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time Based. Examples of SMART goals related to exploration:

*Example 1) By April, 2020, we will identify and summarize division baseline data to determine needs in the division.*

*Example 2) By February, 2020, we will identify and assemble additional team members who are can contribute to exploration activities and could support problem solving and/or future implementation.*

1. Click or tap here to enter text.
2. Click or tap here to enter text.
3. Identify at least three specific strengths of your division that will assist in completing exploration activities.
4. Click or tap here to enter text.
5. Click or tap here to enter text.
6. Click or tap here to enter text.

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# PART 3: SUMITTING THE APPLICATION

**APPLICATION SUBMISSION DEADLINE:**

**November 15, 2019**

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**For questions contact Dawn Hendricks at 804-225-2675 or** **dawn.hendricks@doe.virginia.gov****.**