

**IMPLEMENTATION STUDY:
KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW PROTOCOL
FOR STATE ADMINISTRATORS**

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INTRODUCTIONS

Let's begin with brief introductions!

Can you please briefly introduce yourself? For example, please share your name, title, and a brief description of your role in implementing the pilot initiatives?

CONCEPTUALIZATION OF THE PILOT INITIATIVES

First, thinking back to 2022 before the pilot initiatives came to be, what would you say were the biggest challenges that the state faced in supporting the early childhood workforce?

- For center-based providers? Home-based providers?
- For providers that serve infants and toddlers?
- For Head Start? For state pre-k?

How would you describe the problem(s) that the pilot initiatives were designed to address?

What are the intended outcomes or desired impacts of the pilot initiatives?

Next, we're interested to learn a little more about how your state initially conceived of the pilot initiatives. Can you provide a brief description of how the pilot initiative programs came to be?

- Who were the central people involved in decision-making?
- Were there other state and local program operators, practitioners, economic and social service administrators, or other experts and decision-makers that provided input in the design and implementation of the pilot initiatives? If so, who were they? What type of feedback or input did they provide? How long did it take to conceive of the pilot initiatives?
- How did you arrive at a final decision of what the pilot initiatives would look like?
- Did you use data to make decisions? If so, what type of data?
- What went well in your early collaboration?
- Was there any initial pushback during the design process? If so, from whom? About what?
- Were there any challenges? If so, what were those challenges?

Can you describe how federal and/or state legislation or funding contributed to your planning/decisions?

- COVID relief funds, CCDF, Head Start, relief funds, QRIS, state pre-K

What factors affected your decisions for how to structure the pilot initiatives for center-based programs versus home-based programs?

- Concerns or issues related to equity, fairness, politics, advocacy groups, unions, etc.?

How did you decide on the amount to provide?

- Lead teachers versus assistant teachers
- Center vs. home

SETTING UP THE PILOT INITIATIVES

Next, we're interested to learn a little more about the steps you took to set up the pilot initiatives in your state.

Can you first describe which agencies, subcontracting organizations, or staff at the state-level are responsible for implementing the pilot initiatives?

[Note to interviewer: If they identify individuals or offices' names without specifying agencies, ask follow-up questions to gather more information. For example: Is that a state agency or a private organization? Is that office part of the Department of Education? Is that organization contracted by the state?]

For example, which agencies, organizations, or staff are responsible for:

- Leading or overseeing each initiative (starting at the top)?
- Screening applications and verifying information?
- Processing payments?
- Communicating directly with providers?
- Providing technical assistance?
- Managing the data systems?
- Other? (legal, accounting, administrative staff, support staff, etc.)

Did you make any new MOUs/contracts or changes to existing MOUs/contracts with existing agencies/organizations? For example:

- Did you add scope of work, deliverables, or activities?
- Did you add resources?

Did you make any changes to staffing when setting up the initiatives? For example:

- Did you hire any new staff?
- Did you reassign staff?

What were your biggest successes when setting up the pilot initiatives?

What were your biggest challenges when setting up the pilot initiatives?

LAUNCHING THE PILOT INITIATIVE

Next, we're interested to learn a little more about the steps you took to launch the pilot initiatives in your state.

When and how did you first notify early childhood professionals that you would be launching the pilot initiatives?

- Did you receive any initial feedback? From whom (state officials, directors, providers, etc.)?
- Was there excitement? Resistance?

How did it go when you started receiving applications?

- What was successful? What was challenging? Were there any surprises?
- How did you notify providers of the enrollment decision?

How have you supported programs in navigating the application process?

- What has been most successful?
- What was challenging?
- Were there any surprises?

If you could go back in time to change one thing about the way you designed the pilot initiatives, what would it be? Why?

ANTICIPATING THE FUTURE

Next, I have a few questions about how your team is thinking about the sustainability of the pilot initiatives moving forward.

How would you characterize the successes and challenges of the pilot initiatives in your state?

- What did the state do well to support providers in the application process?
- What could the state have done better to support providers in the application process?
- In retrospect, is there anything missing from the pilot initiative that you think is essential for supporting the workforce?

Were there any unanticipated successes or challenges?

Have you had any conversations about the future of the pilot initiatives and how to sustain it? If yes:

- What was discussed (funding mechanisms, staffing, etc.)?
- Who has been involved in these discussions?

What advice would you give to other state administrators or agencies who are interested in implementing pilot initiatives like this, knowing what you know now?

WRAP-UP

Given what we have discussed, are there any other issues we haven't touched on that you think are important for us to understand about the pilot initiatives in your state?

Thank you for sharing your time and expertise with us today. On behalf of our whole team, we are grateful for your contribution to this study.

If you think of anything else you'd like to share, please feel free to email the study team by responding to the email invitation to participate in this interview.