

NEWS RELEASE | **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** | April 20, 2022

Human Services announces new round of Best in Class grants for qualifying programs serving four-year-olds

BISMARCK, N.D. – The North Dakota Department of Human Services Early Childhood Division is offering a new round of grants for qualifying early childhood programs that serve children in the year before kindergarten and that want to participate in the Best in Class early experiences grant program.

The grant program offers resources for participating early childhood programs, including access to a higher level of support for in-room staff through coaching, play-based curriculum, family engagement, connections to child health and development screening, measurement of child outcomes, and evaluation and enhancements of the space for quality early childhood experiences.

“The Best in Class grant program is a targeted research-supported investment in quality early learning experiences, so that more children enter kindergarten with a good foundation for school success,” said Best in Class Program Administrator Shonda Wild.

Programs committed to delivering the highest quality experiences to the children and families they serve are invited to apply by April 22 at 5 p.m. CT. Applicants may include public schools that offer preschools, Head Start programs and licensed child care programs in North Dakota. Applicants will need to provide a description of their current program, quality provisions and their experience offering an inclusive environment.

Application details, including a recording of the grant question and answer session, are available online at www.nd.gov/dhs/services/childfamily/bestinclass.html.

In 2021, North Dakota lawmakers approved the establishment of a competitive grant program to support school readiness and serve North Dakota children and families the year before they enter kindergarten. Twenty-three programs participated in round one in 2021. Funding support included \$120,000 per participating classroom for programs with 18 children, and \$60,000 for programs with a group size of nine. Matching funds are required. Those programs are also eligible to reapply for funding during this new grant period.

###

MEDIA CONTACTS:

Heather Steffl | 701-328-4933
hsteffl@nd.gov

LuWanna Lawrence | 701-328-1892
lklawrence@nd.gov