
BUDGET UNIT BRIEF – FY 2025

Fiscal Services Division

July 1, 2024



Ground Floor, State Capitol Building

Des Moines, Iowa 50319

515.281.3566

Early Childhood Iowa Initiative General Aid

Overview

The Early Childhood Iowa (ECI) Initiative was established to allow the State and communities to work together to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of early care, education, health, and human services provided to families with children from ages zero to five. The ECI Initiative is administered by the ECI State Board. The ECI State Board promotes a vision for a comprehensive early care, education, health, and human services system in this State. The Board consists of 21 voting members: 15 citizen members and 6 State agency members. The six State agency members are the directors or their designees from the following departments: Economic Development Authority, Education, Human Rights, Health and Human Services, and Workforce Development. The ECI State Board includes four legislators as nonvoting members.

The State Board oversees and manages the School Ready Grant (SRG) funding made available to the local ECI Area Boards from the General Fund appropriation. The SRG funding is distributed based on data from the most recent U.S. Census according to the following formula:

- 45.0% based on children ages zero to five with family income up to 185.0% of the federal poverty level.
- 35.0% based on the total children ages zero to five.
- 20.0% base funding allocated equally among the 99 counties.

An ECI Area Board enables local citizens to lead collaborative efforts in strategic planning, oversight, and managing of programs and available funding from federal, State, local, and private sources. The focus of the ECI Area is to achieve the following desired results:

- Healthy children.
- Children ready to succeed in school.
- Safe and supportive communities.
- Secure and nurturing families.
- Secure and nurturing early learning environments.

The ECI State Board oversees 38 ECI Area Boards, which follow county boundaries.

General Aid

Early Childhood Iowa General Aid has received a General Fund appropriation of \$5.4 million since FY 2012. In FY 2018, the ECI Preschool Tuition Assistance and ECI Family and Parent support appropriations were not funded, but ECI General Aid was increased to \$22.2 million and is currently at \$23.2 million. The appropriation includes three allocations:

- **Early Childhood Iowa Office and Technical Assistance.** An allocation of \$265,950 is provided to the ECI Office within the Department of Management for technical assistance and to provide skill development and support for training the ECI State Board. The ECI State Board cannot use these funds for legal fees, fiscal agent fees, or liability insurance. The allocation also cannot be used by

More Information

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ECI staff in completing administrative responsibilities such as work related to ECI Board meetings, issuing and monitoring of contracts, and processing of payment claims.

- **Quality Improvement.** An allocation of \$2.3 million is to be used by local ECI Area Boards to improve the quality of early care, health, and education programs. The ECI Area Boards can use the funding for additional staff and for the reimbursement of staff. The ECI State Board allocates \$30,000 to each ECI Area under this allocation to support staff. The ECI State Board can reserve a portion of this allocation, not to exceed \$88,650, for the technical assistance expenses of the ECI State Office. The remaining funds under this allocation are distributed 50.0% based on land area and 50.0% based on the total children ages zero to five in each of the ECI Areas.
- **Professional Development and Training.** An allocation of \$825,030 is used to support professional development and training activities for people working in early care, health, and education. Professional development and training is available to the ECI State Board, ECI Area Boards, and the Early Childhood Stakeholders Alliance. The Alliance supports and provides broad input to the ECI State Board in developing a high-quality early childhood system that meets the needs of children and their families. The Alliance includes members from any organization that touches the lives of children ages zero to five.

Related Statutes and Administrative Rules

Iowa Code chapter [256I](#)

Iowa Administrative Code [249](#) and [541—9](#)

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