

# Help Me Grow National Center Incubator Hub Initiative

## Request For Applications

### Project Overview

The Help Me Grow (HMG) National Center is seeking applications from HMG systems to participate in the HMG Incubator Hub Initiative, an exploratory project intended to support HMG affiliates in enhancing their system infrastructure with structured training, technical support, and activities that advance implementation of the HMG Model's Structural Requirements (Organizing Entity, Spread & Scale, and Continuous System Improvement). In participating, HMG systems will lead efforts to advance HMG Model implementation, increase local impact, and contribute to assessment and development of replicable strategies and resources to be utilized across the HMG National Affiliate Network.

The HMG Model provides a structured approach to strengthening early childhood systems by building upon existing community resources to ensure that families can access the services and supports they need in any given community. HMG affiliates have been implementing key aspects of the HMG Model to varying degrees and adapting to fit local contexts for many years. However, as the early childhood landscape evolves, there is a growing need to assess, refine, and strategically align implementation efforts with the HMG Model's Structural Requirements to ensure sustainability, impact, and scalability of these efforts.

The HMG Incubator Hub Initiative was designed to support this progression, providing structured guidance, technical assistance, and a peer learning opportunity within the HMG Network in order to help affiliates explore and advance the critical elements necessary for system-wide success. Through this initiative, participating HMG systems will be supported in understanding, applying, and strengthening the Structural Requirements that uplift HMG Model implementation. Additionally, affiliates' work will provide insights into the activities necessary for implementing HMG's Structural Requirements within the Model, as well as inform the resources and capacity-building assistance needed to replicate success across the HMG Network.

HMG Incubator Hub participants will:

- Strengthen and improve their efforts related to the HMG Model's Structural Requirements.
- Actualize opportunities to advance toward a goal related to:
  - HMG Organizing Entity's governance strategy;
  - Continuous System Improvement with the Targeted Universalism Framework; or
  - Spread & Scale of HMG system presence and impact through policy advocacy.
- Strengthen system infrastructure, sustainability, and community change efforts.
- Contribute to HMG Model enhancement with replicable approaches to strengthen, implement, impact, and evaluate Structural Requirements and the HMG Model as a whole. This includes, when applicable, sharing existing resources related to project work that can be held up as examples and/or be adapted for Network-wide use.

The Incubator Hub is a year-long Learning Community that will provide training, coaching, technical assistance, and peer learning sessions supported by Capacity-Building Partners and HMG National Center. Six HMG systems will be selected to advance work and co-create resources that reinforce one of the three HMG Model's Structural Requirements. Each Structural Requirement will be represented by a "branch" of the Incubator Hub, consisting of two HMG systems working in each.

1. **Branch 1:** Organizing Entity with a focus on governance
2. **Branch 2:** Continuous System Improvement with a focus on Targeted Universalism
3. **Branch 3:** Spread & Scale with a focus on policy advocacy

Prospective applicants may apply for multiple branches of the Incubator Hub, but systems will be selected to participate in one branch only. Each of the selected HMG systems will receive an award of up to \$50,000 to participate in the HMG Incubator Hub.

HMG National is seeking applications from Site Teams, defined as a group of at least three individuals who collectively represent their Incubator Site. Each Site Team is responsible for engaging in all project activities across both phases; bringing diverse perspectives and active engagement in Learning Sessions and technical assistance activities; and ensuring that learnings and improvements are implemented across the broader HMG system they represent.

## LEARN MORE: Virtual Information Session for Prospective Applicants

Join us for an optional information session on **Wednesday, April 2, 2025 at 2:00 PM ET** for an overview of the RFA and submission requirements. This session will also cover the goals and structure of the Incubator Hub Initiative. There will be time during the session to answer questions. Session recording will be shared with all registrants after the session for those who cannot attend in real time.

[Register for the Information Session](#)

## Commitment

### Duration

- Each Site Team member will participate in the full project year from May 2025 - April 2026.
- The project duration includes two phases, pre-implementation and implementation, which are outlined below under the Incubator Hub Experience section of this document.

### Time Commitment

- Each Site Team member will commit an estimated 15-20 hours per month throughout the duration of the project. Time includes project related meetings/trainings as well as time in between sessions to implement work related to project goals.

Participants will be expected to participate fully in the experience as detailed below. Participants will be expected to attend at least 80% of all project trainings, sessions and meetings and follow through with all

tasks and assignments associated with the project. This requires both meeting participation and independent work in between sessions, estimated to average 2 hours a week per participant.

## Incentive

Selected systems will be provided with a stipend for their participation in the HMG Incubator Hub. This stipend is to be used to offset time and effort devoted to project-related commitments, such as capacity provided by the local HMG team and other community providers and partners. The total stipend amount will be disbursed in two payments, totaling up to \$50,000.

Funding will be issued via a contract from Connecticut Children's Medical Center (the entity housing the HMG National Center). Applicants should submit a budget narrative with accompanying full budget in their application.

## Glossary

**Branch:** Incubator Hub branches are organized around each of the three Structural Requirements. The three Hub branches are Organizing Entity, Continuous System Improvement, and Spread & Scale. Each branch is supported by HMG National and a specified Capacity-Building Partner. Each Incubator Hub branch includes two Incubator Sites.

**Capacity-Building Partners (CBPs):** External entities with subject matter expertise and skills in specific content areas. CBPs for this project include StriveTogether, Voices for Healthy Kids, and Seed Collaborative. Each CBP supports a different branch of the Incubator Hub through structured training, coaching, and technical assistance.

**Incubator Hub:** Learning Community that will provide subject matter expert training, coaching, technical assistance, and peer learning sessions. This term is inclusive of the full team of supporting HMG National staff, Capacity-Building Partners, and all participating Site Teams across branches. The Incubator Hub is a collaborative space for learning, strategy development, and technical assistance.

**Incubator Site:** Each HMG system selected to participate in the Incubator Hub Initiative. An Incubator Site can be a single-system state or one, multiple, or all local systems from a multi-system state acting as a unified group. Each branch of the Incubator Hub includes two Incubator Sites.

**Incubator Hub Initiative:** Title for this structured exploration project designed to support HMG systems in enhancing system infrastructure through targeted training, technical assistance, and implementation activities that advance the HMG Model's Structural Requirements.

**HMG System:** Operationalization of all four HMG Core Components. Individual systems are recognized by the operation of a HMG Centralized Access Point. HMG systems may be at the local or state-level, depending on the reach of the Centralized Access Point.

**Leadership Team:** A HMG Leadership Team helps to decide on the priorities and strategic direction of a given HMG implementation and help ensure that operations align with high-level HMG goals and objectives. It is composed of representatives from agencies, community partners, and individuals who

have expertise in early childhood services in their region/state. Leadership Team members share mutual interests, serve similar populations, and have the capacity to move an agenda forward.

**Learning Sessions:** Monthly peer-to-peer convenings of all Hub branches, for a total of 6 sessions throughout the implementation phase. These sessions are an opportunity to advance knowledge of early childhood system-building efforts, share learnings, reflect upon case studies, and collaborate with all the Incubator Sites to advance toward project goals.

**Multi-System Affiliate State:** A HMG affiliate state containing a constellation of Centralized Access Points.

**Organizing Entity:** Agency or body that is formally responsible for coordinating and managing HMG efforts; these exist at the local and state-level, and HMG National Center at the national-level.

**Single-System Affiliate State:** A HMG affiliate state organized around a single HMG Centralized Access Point.

**Site Team:** Group of at least three individuals who collectively represent their Incubator Site. Each Site Team is responsible for engaging in all project activities across both phases; bringing diverse perspectives and active engagement in Learning Sessions and technical assistance activities; and ensuring that learnings and improvements are implemented across the broader HMG system they represent.

**Targeted Universalism:** The Targeted Universalism Framework provides a step-by-step, data-driven guide that helps us develop effective, targeted strategies for specific segment groups within a larger population in order to help us achieve a universal goal that improves outcomes for everyone across that population.<sup>1</sup>

## Incubator Hub Branch Overview

The Incubator Hub is structured exploration project designed to support six HMG systems in enhancing system infrastructure through targeted training, technical assistance, and implementation activities that advance the HMG Model's Structural Requirements. Each Structural Requirement will be represented by a "branch" of the Incubator Hub, consisting of two HMG systems working in each.

1. **Branch 1:** Organizing Entity with a focus on governance
2. **Branch 2:** Continuous System Improvement with a focus on Targeted Universalism
3. **Branch 3:** Spread & Scale with a focus on policy advocacy

Below provides an overview for each of the three Incubator Hub branches.

### Organizing Entity Branch

The two HMG systems selected to participate in the Organizing Entity branch will strategically advance a goal related to the HMG Organizing Entity's vision and governance strategy for advancing their system-

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<sup>1</sup> Othering & Belonging Institute. (2019). *Targeted universalism: Policy & practice*. University of California, Berkeley. [Targeted Universalism | Othering & Belonging Institute](#)

building efforts. This branch is open to HMG systems that meet eligibility criteria outlined below in the Eligibility section of this document.

This branch will be supported with structured training, coaching, and technical assistance provided by the HMG National Center and [StriveTogether](#). StriveTogether is an independent 501 c(3) organization based out of Cincinnati, Ohio. Founded in 2011, StriveTogether supports a network of communities that want the best for every child. The organization helps communities build strong civic infrastructure to support equitable outcomes for children, cradle to career. Their approach to work is to support communities to eliminate disparities and change outcomes through convening, coaching, codifying, investing, and influencing.

### ***Continuous System Improvement Branch***

The two HMG systems selected to participate in the Continuous System Improvement branch will utilize the Targeted Universalism (TU) Framework from [UC Berkeley's Othering & Belonging Institute](#) to strategically advance system improvement toward a universal goal achieved through targeted strategies for identified segments of the population. This branch is open to HMG systems that meet eligibility criteria outlined below in the Eligibility section of this document.

This branch will be supported with structured training, individualized coaching, and technical assistance provided by the HMG National Center and Seed Collaborative who will support participating HMG systems to develop and implement a project that will improve outcomes for the young children and families they serve. [Seed Collaborative](#) supports visionary initiatives to advance a more equitable and sustainable world through the operationalization of initiatives, programs, and services based in Targeted Universalism and belonging.

### ***Spread & Scale Branch***

The two HMG systems selected to participate in the Spread & Scale branch will strategically advance a policy goal that leverages their system's existing coalition-building and advocacy efforts along with unique calculations from HMG's proprietary Return on Investment (ROI) Calculator. This branch is open to HMG systems that meet eligibility criteria outlined below in the Eligibility section of this document.

This branch will be supported with structured training, campaign planning, and technical assistance provided by the HMG National Center and [Voices for Healthy Kids](#). An initiative of the American Heart Association, Voices for Healthy Kids works around the country to improve or create equitable policies that will make the places kids live, learn, and play healthier. The organization supports advocacy campaigns, creating visibility for issues that affect children's health, mobilizing communities, helping to advance science and research via communications and messaging expertise, and fostering partnerships. Voices for Healthy Kids is particularly focused on addressing the inequities, biases, and racism that exist in current systems and policies and how they have impacted the lives of children.

## **Eligibility**

HMG National is seeking participation from HMG systems from across the National Affiliate Network. HMG systems that are accepted into the project will be called HMG Incubator Sites.

We recognize that participating in this effort is a significant commitment, and that systems cannot be represented by just one person. Therefore, we are seeking applications on behalf of HMG systems, not individuals. HMG Site Teams participating in this project will represent their full HMG system, and consist of at least three members of the HMG system, which may be at the state or community-level.

Eligibility for all branches includes the maintenance of affiliation with the HMG National Network for the duration of the project, which includes completion of the HMG National Fidelity Assessment.

See respective eligibility criteria for each branch below.

### *Organizing Entity Branch Eligibility*

- Systems with any type of HMG Organizing Entity are welcome to apply (e.g. governmental, community-based, medical, and academic institutions).
- Systems should have a HMG Organizing Entity that demonstrates a minimum of 2 years of HMG system-building efforts.
- Systems should apply with at least three participants who will represent their Incubator Site team. See Glossary for full definition of a Site Team.
  - Site Teams for this branch *must* include a HMG lead (at either the state or local-level) with understanding and experience implementing the HMG Model, as well as the ability to lead their Site Team's participation in this project.
  - Multi-system states can apply as one team to focus on building out multi-system state infrastructure. While state leads are not required to be part of the Site Team, local leads from multi-system HMG states should discuss plans to apply for this initiative with their state lead and discuss opportunities for shared participation in this project.
- Systems should demonstrate an understanding of the local, state, and federal governance structures that guide administration of their state/community's early childhood programs.
- Systems must have an active HMG Leadership Team. See Glossary for full definition of a HMG Leadership Team.
  - Systems should have an existing or emerging mechanism for engaging HMG Leadership Team representatives and stakeholders in a commitment to shared decision-making, strategic planning, and cross-sector collaboration.
- Systems should identify a goal related to the HMG Organizing Entity's vision and strategy for advancing system-building efforts in at least one of the following strategic areas (one goal covering multiple areas, or several goals):
  - Governance and decision-making structures
    - Example goals: establish shared decision-making processes between backbone organization and steering committees; clarify roles, responsibilities, and accountability structures; develop policies/procedures to guide governance decisions across partners.
  - Strategic planning and alignment
    - Example goals: develop a strategic plan for aligning activities across local HMG

systems (in a multi-system state) or across a state or community's local early childhood system; map existing services, identify gaps, and plan for improved coordination across agencies; establish key priorities and action steps for system-wide alignment.

- Cross-sector collaboration and stakeholder engagement
  - Example goals: partner with leaders in three or more child-serving sectors; create advisory councils that include family and community representation; build or strengthen partnerships with early childhood system stakeholders at a state or local level; co-design engagement strategies with diverse stakeholders.
- *Strong preference for states that are also home to a coalition from the [StriveTogether Network](#).*

### Continuous System Improvement Branch Eligibility

- Systems with any type of HMG Organizing Entity are welcome to apply (e.g. governmental, community-based, medical, and academic institutions).
- Systems should apply with at least three participants who will represent their Incubator Site Team. See Glossary for full definition of a Site Team. Site Teams for this branch should include:
  - Individuals who serve in roles that help carry out HMG operations, support local implementation of the HMG Model, and/or have the capacity and authority to lead change; and
  - At least one member who has experience with strategic planning for the HMG system.
- Systems should have knowledge and experience in implementing the HMG Model and demonstrate past efforts to implement improvements over time, with clear goals to maximize efficiency of HMG processes, apply best practices, and enhance outcomes for children and families.
- Systems should be familiar with the Targeted Universalism Framework, and demonstrate ability to complete stages 1-3 to prepare to focus on stages 4-5 in the Incubator project.

### Eligibility Considerations Associated with Each Step of the Targeted Universalism Framework

Step	Step Description	Eligibility Considerations (in bold text)
1	Co-create a universal goal	<b>Applicants should identify a universal goal to address in this project.</b> <i>Site Teams will have the opportunity to further develop or adapt the universal goal during the project.</i>
2	Assess the general population's performance relative to the universal goal	<b>Applicants should be able to access and utilize data sources to assess the general population, such as demographic data.</b>
3	Assess segment groups' performance relative to the universal goal	<b>Applicants should be able to disaggregate data based on demographics in order to identify segment groups of focus.</b>
4	Assess and understand the structures and systems that support or impede each group from achieving the universal goal	<i>Participants will receive coaching and guidance to support community collaboration with representation from segment groups of focus to understand the meaning behind data on that group.</i>



5	Develop and implement targeted strategies so all groups reach the universal goal	<i>Participants will receive coaching and support in co-creating plans for implementing targeted strategies.</i>
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### Spread & Scale Branch Eligibility

- Systems should have completed and submitted a Return-on-Investment Calculator to the HMG National Center, which currently includes the following systems: Alabama; Delaware; Oregon; South Carolina; Utah; Vermont; Oakland, Michigan; Ottawa, Michigan; and select California systems: Alameda, Contra Costa, Orange County, Santa Clara, San Mateo, San Diego, San Francisco, and Yolo Counties.
- Systems with any type of HMG Organizing Entity are welcome to apply (e.g. governmental, community-based, medical, and academic institutions).
  - *Applicants must have the ability to design and participate in policy advocacy campaigns.*
- Systems should apply with at least three participants who will represent their Incubator Site Team. See Glossary for full definition of a Site Team. Site Teams for this branch should include:
  - A HMG lead (at either the state or local-level).
  - Members engaged in coalition-building work, advocacy or policy change efforts, and members with knowledge of the results of their system’s Return on Investment Calculator.
- Systems should have knowledge and experience related to implementing the HMG Model and demonstrate efforts to advance HMG’s impact through activities such as (but not limited to):
  - Participation in advocacy coalitions or engaging in state or local policy discussions;
  - Engaging family leaders or community partners in advocacy efforts; and/or
  - Data collection activities resulting in aligned measurement practices with broader early childhood system indicators and sharing data with policymakers.
- Systems should have an established policy goal with demonstrated baseline efforts to advance towards that goal. Baseline efforts may include:
  - Participation in an advocacy-focused coalition;
  - Sharing data on service delivery and HMG Model implementation with advocates or policymakers;
  - Creation of educational materials for legislative and funder audiences; and/or
  - Building relationships with early childhood organizations with lobbying and advocacy expertise.
- At least one member of the Site Team must be able to attend an in-person campaign planning session on July 17, 2025, following the HMG National Forum in Hartford, CT.

## Incubator Hub Experience

Six HMG systems will be selected to participate across 3 branches of the Incubator Hub. Those selected will engage in a series of activities in two phases over the course of one year (May 2025 - April 2026). Details associated with Phase 1: Pre-Implementation and Phase 2: Implementation are provided below. Dates and times of project activities are subject to change.



## Phase 1: Pre-Implementation

**Dates:** May 2025 - August 2025

**Time Commitment:** 18-20 hours\*

**Purpose:** The pre-implementation phase will prepare Incubator Sites with the foundational knowledge, strategies, and planning support necessary to implement activities related to each branch's focus area. Through targeted training, coaching, and action planning, this phase will strengthen each branch's understanding of their role in enhancing the respective Structural Requirement.

### Goals:

- Capacity-Building Partners will provide Incubator Sites with foundational understanding of each branch's focus area:
  1. Organizing Entity focus: Governance
  2. Continuous System Improvement focus: Targeted Universalism
  3. Spread & Scale focus: Policy Advocacy
- Capacity-Building Partners will support participants in leveraging learnings to refine identified goals and develop action plans to strategically advance toward those goals.

### Organizing Entity Pre-Implementation Activities

- **Step 1:** Training Series (12 hours total): StriveTogether will facilitate a comprehensive training course called Strategies for Systems Change which will focus on implementing long-term transformation efforts. This training will include: individual self-paced learning following a tailored learning plan; a 2.5-hour orientation to introduce Incubator Sites to key course concepts and tools; and a series of three 2-hour sessions with coach/facilitator to apply learning and support in applicable roles through the concepts and materials. *(June-August, dates TBD)*
- **Step 2:** Goal-Setting Workshop (2 hours total): StriveTogether and HMG National will facilitate a 2-hour workshop to guide Incubator Sites in refining project goals and crafting an action plan to advance implementation efforts. *(August, date TBD)*

### Continuous System Improvement Pre-Implementation Activities

- **Step 1:** Co-creation of Training Sessions (2 hours total): Seed Collaborative and HMG National will facilitate one co-creative planning session to inform curriculum and materials for training sessions. *(June, date TBD)*
- **Step 2:** Training Series (8 hours total): Seed Collaborative will facilitate a total of four 2-hour virtual Targeted Universalism training sessions that focus on deepening understanding and capacity to apply TU. The series will focus on building capacity to make meaning from data and using that deep understanding to design targeted strategies that shift systems in ways that will improve conditions for young children and families. *(July-September, dates TBD)*
- **Step 3:** Action Planning Workshop (2 hours total): Following the training sessions, Seed will facilitate one two-hour workshop with each Incubator Site Team to support their application of TU and specifically the co-creative processes of stages 4 and 5 of TU. The workshops will help Site Teams co-create core elements of their action plan including how they will facilitate co-creation through stages 4 and 5, how they will identify systems and needed change, and how they will co-

create targeted strategies. Upon their conclusion, the workshops will leave participants with a set of actionable steps for implementing their TU project. *(September-October, date TBD)*

### ***Spread & Scale Pre-Implementation Activities***

- **Step 1:** Training (3 hours total): Voices for Healthy Kids will facilitate a 3-hour training that will introduce the Power Prism®, a step-by-step framework for recognizing and acting on opportunities to build momentum in an advocacy campaign. This framework is designed for learning to make it easier for decision-makers to “give you what you want.” HMG National will also present a refresher overview of the Return-on-Investment calculator. (June 9, 2025 from 2:00-5:00 PM ET)
- **Step 2:** Campaign Planning Session (8 hours total)\*: Voices for Healthy Kids will facilitate a full-day, in-person training and planning session. This session will guide participants in the development of a policy change campaign plan utilizing the “power tools” of advocacy. (July 17, 2025 from 9:00 AM-5:00 PM ET)

\*Estimated time commitment does not include travel time for the Spread & Scale branch’s in-person campaign planning session, which will take place on July 17, 2025 following the HMG National Forum in Hartford, CT. At least one member of the Site Team is required to attend the session. Affiliates are responsible for travel, accommodations, and related expenses for the in-person session, and may allocate funds from the participation stipend to cover these expenses as needed.

## ***Phase 2: Implementation***

**Dates:** September 2025 - April 2026

**Time Commitment:** *Estimated 10-20 hours per month*

**Purpose:** The implementation phase will focus on translating learning into practice by executing the action plans developed in the pre-implementation phase. Through structured peer learning, technical assistance, and individualized coaching, Incubator Site Teams will advance their system transformation efforts by applying targeted strategies, refining their approaches, and monitoring progress.

### **Goals:**

#### **1. Facilitate Ongoing Peer Learning and Capacity Building**

- Participation in monthly virtual peer Hub Learning Sessions with all participants and capacity-building partners.
- Preparation and presentation of a case study for at least one Hub Learning Session, where Site Teams will showcase challenges, adaptations, and successes.

#### **2. Support Action Plan Implementation**

- Implementation of action plans, which will vary widely by branch and Incubator Site, but include all efforts taken to advance the action plan such as organizing and facilitating community/coalition meetings, facilitating team trainings, completing QI cycles, updating policies/procedures, and coordinated outreach and advocacy efforts.

### 3. Provide Technical Assistance and Coaching

- Utilization of group technical assistance and individual coaching to address challenges, refine implementation efforts, and monitor progress.

### 4. Enhance and Develop System Improvement Tools

- Utilization and co-creation of resources for implementation of activities related to the Structural Requirement of focus. These can include case studies, self-assessments, guides, toolkits, and revisions or enhancements to strategic plans or existing system efforts.

### 5. Monitor Progress and Evaluate Impact

- Completion of periodic evaluation and progress reports to inform progress of project activities and action plan implementation.

## Timeline

- **Kickoff Session:** May 19, 2025 from 2:00-4:00 PM ET
- **Pre-implementation:** June - September 2025 (activities and timing vary by branch - see above)
- **Learning Session 1:** September 25, 2025 from 2:00-4:00 PM ET
- **Learning Session 2:** October 23, 2025 from 2:00-4:00 PM ET
- **Learning Session 3:** November 20, 2025 from 2:00-4:00 PM ET
- **Learning Session 4:** December 18, 2025 from 2:00-4:00 PM ET
- **Learning Session 5:** January 22, 2026 from 2:00-4:00 PM ET
- **Learning Session 6:** February 19, 2026 from 2:00-4:00 PM ET
- **Closing Session:** March 19, 2026 from 2:00-4:00 PM ET

## Data and Evaluation

### Evaluation Goals:

1. To assess overall experience in participating in the Incubator Hub Initiative.
2. To assess changes in knowledge and/or skills of Incubator Sites.
3. To understand whether the Incubator Sites met their goals.

### Evaluation expectation of participants and measurement strategies:

- Completion of Data and Evaluation Plan (Phase 1: following goal setting)
- Completion of Reflection Tool (Midpoint: Phase 1; Completion: Phase 2)
- Completion of Experience Surveys (Midpoint, Completion)
- Completion of quick polls to measure knowledge transfer (Beginning/end of Learning Sessions)

## Application Process & Key Dates

- The HMG Incubator Hub application is available online, due by 5:00 PM AKST on April 28, 2025.
- Interested HMG systems should submit one application on behalf of the whole Site Team.
- Applicants selected to be an Incubator Site will be notified on May 5, 2025.
- Once accepted, participants will attend the kickoff session on May 19, 2025 at 2:00-4:00 PM ET.

**[Complete the HMG Incubator Hub Application Here](#)**

## Application Preview

Provided below is the full set of questions you will encounter when submitting an application to participate in the HMG Incubator Hub Initiative. This section is intended to provide a preview of the application only, and cannot be used to submit an application.

**All applications must be submitted digitally [here](#).**

Applications are due by 5:00 PM AKST on April 28, 2025.

For questions on the HMG National Incubator Hub Initiative, please contact Laraib Humayun, Program Manager of Implementation & Systems Building at [lhumayun@connecticutchildrens.org](mailto:lhumayun@connecticutchildrens.org).

### INSTRUCTIONS

In an effort to reduce burden on applying systems, HMG National will be leveraging recently submitted information to use towards your application. While completing this section of the application, please note that the National Center will review your CY2024 Fidelity Assessment (submitted to HMG National by April 1, 2025) and other project applications (such as Systems Leadership Learning Community and Affiliate Advisory Board, if available) for eligibility, as some questions below are *partially* addressed in the Fidelity Assessment and elsewhere. Please refer to your submitted CY2024 Fidelity Assessment and other project applications while completing these questions:

1. For questions where your answers submitted via the Fidelity Assessment or elsewhere seem sufficient, do not write out a question response and instead indicate where the response was given. For example, “Response provided in CY2024 Fidelity Assessment.” If referring to your Fidelity Assessment response, please be mindful of the completeness of your response and whether it adequately answers the question in this application.
2. If you provided a partial response in the Fidelity Assessment or elsewhere, and/or you would like to elaborate or have updates since the Fidelity Assessment submission, please indicate (for example: “Partial response in our Fidelity Assessment”) and include the additional information or updates you would like to share.

**NOTE: Responses should be a maximum of 500 words for each question.**

### Section 1. General Information

1. System Information
  - HMG System:
  - HMG State:
  - Organizing Entity:
  - Geographic Area Served:
  - Main Contact (Name, Title, Email, Phone):
2. Incubator Site Team
  - Site Team Member 1:
    - Name

- Email address
  - Organization
  - Title
  - How long has Site Team Member 1 been associated with HMG?
    - Under 6 months
    - 6-11 months
    - 12-23 months
    - 2-4 years
    - More than 4 years
  - What is Site Team Member 1's primary role at your HMG? Please select the one that best fits.
    - HMG lead
    - Fidelity Assessment lead
    - Centralized Access Point staff
    - Family and Community Outreach staff
    - Child Health Care Provider Outreach staff
    - Policy and Advocacy staff
    - Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion staff
  - Describe Site Team Member 1's responsibilities.
- Attestation: Site Team Member 1 has reviewed the Project Overview, Commitment, Incubator Hub Experience, and Eligibility sections of the Request for Applications (RFA) document and confirms ability to meet all of the commitment requirements. (Y/N)
  - Attestation: Site Team Member 1 will attend the 2-hour kickoff session on May 13, 2025 at 3:00 PM ET.

*This set of questions repeats for 2 more Site Team members (and 2 optional additional members)*

### 3. Organizational Background

- Describe your HMG system's Organizing Entity. Specify whether it operates at the state or local-level, depending on your system type (e.g., a single-system state, local system within a multi-system state, state lead of a multi-system state, etc.). Include details on the Organizing Entity's role in supporting your HMG system's implementation and sustainability.
- Describe your Site Team members' experience with strategic planning for your HMG system, including relevant examples of their engagement in the process.
- Describe your HMG system's Leadership Team. Full definition of a HMG Leadership Team can be found in the Glossary section of the RFA. Include information about composition, roles/responsibilities, how often and via what format it convenes. If applicable, please share blank or shareable examples of partnership agreements. (*Fidelity: Q90*)

- What does early childhood system-building mean to your HMG? Describe your team's experience working on early childhood system-building initiatives.
- Why are you interested in participating in this project? Include any relevant information about how participation in this project will advance your HMG system toward strategic priorities.

## Section 2. Branch-Specific Questions

If your system is eligible and interested in applying for more than one branch, you may submit responses for each of the branches your system team is interested in, and skip the rest. While systems are welcome to apply to more than one branch, they may only be selected to participate in one.

### Organizing Entity Branch Application Questions

1. Describe the current HMG Leadership Team's governance structure, including: how priorities are set, how decisions are made, who is involved in decision-making, and how members of the team implement HMG system strategic priorities. If applicable, upload blank or shareable examples of partnership agreements for Leadership Team members.
2. Briefly describe the local/state/federal governance structures for early childhood programs and services in your region that impact your implementation of HMG.
3. Describe challenges your HMG Organizing Entity has faced in at least one of the following three strategic areas (additionally note any anticipated challenges amidst the current policy landscape):
  - a. Governance and decision-making structures
  - b. Strategic planning and alignment
  - c. Cross-sector collaboration and stakeholder engagement
4. State the goal your HMG system would like to achieve through participation in this project. Goals should be related to the HMG Organizing Entity's vision and strategy for advancing system-building efforts in one of the 3 strategic areas above. See the RFA for examples. Note: goal can be revised after project start.
5. Describe any prior efforts to align activities across local or state early childhood systems.
6. *Local systems in a multi-system state: if the anticipated project goal involves coordination with other local systems in your state, have you discussed participation in this project with your HMG State Lead? If yes, explain your system's current collaborative relationship with the state lead and the extent to which they will be involved in this project.*

### Continuous System Improvement Branch Application Questions

1. Describe any standard, formal, and/or informal processes, procedures, and tools your HMG system utilizes for measurement and continuous quality improvement. (*Fidelity: Q70\_FR, Q77*)



2. Describe any formal or informal projects, inclusive of assessments or evaluations your HMG has completed to analyze impact of HMG activities or collaborative efforts to effect community change. Include relevant findings and attach any supporting documents. HMG National will review your submitted 2024 Fidelity Assessment for additional data; if there are updates since submission, please be sure to indicate here. *(Fidelity: Q65a-e, Q66a-g, Q67a, Q67b Q73, Q85)*
3. How has your system used data to guide decision-making or drive improvements? Provide relevant examples. *(Fidelity: Q67b, Q69, Q75)*
4. Describe any formal and informal community engagement efforts, including experience soliciting community feedback. Note any experiences, successes and challenges with discussing systems issues with families.
5. What challenges have you faced in implementing data-driven system improvements? *(Fidelity: Q71\_FR)*
6. State the universal goal you want to work on during this initiative (Note: goal can be revised after project start).
  - *Guidance: The co-creation of the universal goal begins with recognition of a societal problem and collective aspiration. Universal goals are data-driven, outcomes based and focused on structures, systems, and institutions. Assessment and understanding of data and disaggregated information often inform the universal goal and must be part of the process. The process of co-creating universal goals often includes principles of bridging, shared leadership, inclusion, and consensus decisions, which align with building belonging. Define who is “everyone” in deciding the universal goal.*
7. Describe any data sources you will use to assess the general family population in relationship to your universal goal in your HMG’s Centralized Access Point catchment area. Provide examples of existing data that has already been obtained to support this work, and/or plans to collect new data.
  - *Guidance: The general population assessment forms the foundation for identifying structural/systemic barriers and then contributes to the development of targeted strategies. The general population for this work are all families living within the footprint of your HMG Centralized Access Point catchment area.*
8. Describe how existing/new data will be disaggregated based on demographics to identify segment groups of focus, and how data is used to identify a priority segment of the general population. You may reference data provided in your Fidelity Assessment.
  - *Guidance: Note how you will conduct a more granular assessment of how segment groups perform relative to the universal goal. Disaggregated data will point to how the structure/system distributes opportunities/resources by segment groups. The focus is to identify distances from the universal goal, not disparities between segment groups.*

## Spread & Scale Branch Application Questions

Attestation: Our system has completed and shared the HMG Return-on-Investment (ROI) Calculator with the HMG National Center.

Preparing for Participation with Three Key Questions:

Voices for Healthy Kids approaches campaigns by aligning work around three key questions: what do you want, why do you want it, and who has the power to give it to you? The following questions will prepare Site Teams to think through your existing work in this way.

1. *What do you want?* What is the policy goal your system hopes to achieve through participation in this project? Describe any efforts taken to advance toward this goal.
2. *Why do you want it?* How will expanding your system's ability to influence public policy or appropriations drive your ability to spread and scale HMG?
3. *Who has the power to give it to you?* How does your system engage in policy discussions at the state or local-level, and who are your stakeholders? Please include:
  - Your awareness of the most effective early childhood advocacy coalition in your state/community and one of their biggest accomplishments.
  - Advocacy coalition(s), if any, in which your system participates and in what capacity.
  - How might you tap into networks like National Collaborative for Infants & Toddlers (NCIT) or similar entities to strengthen your project?

Experience Using Data for Public Policy Change

4. Describe your system's experience working to inform and shape public policy using ROI or other data, personal stories, meeting with lawmakers, coalitions, etc. (*Fidelity: Q86-87*)
5. Describe your system's experience working to secure public funding for HMG and the activities involved.
6. Describe your system's past and current efforts to advance HMG's impact through activities such as (but not limited to): policy advocacy, data-driven alignment practices, and policy research. (*Fidelity: Q86-87*)

## Section 3. Commitment and Universal Expectations

### 1. Time Commitment

Attestation: All members of the Site Team are able to commit to the 12-month engagement, including participation in all activities of Phases 1-2 with an expectation of 80% attendance in meetings and completing all tasks and assignments.

### 2. Sustainability Efforts

How will insights and information from this project be shared within your team and beyond to ensure continued impact? For example, authoring blog posts and a report about experience/learnings that could be disseminated to funders and early childhood networks.

3. Leadership Engagement

- Describe how you will engage individuals within your HMG system who make decisions, allocate resources, and ensure decisions are enforced.
- Who are other relevant stakeholders your Site Team will involve in this work? Examples include health care or advocacy networks with committees or partners that could share resources or expertise. Describe how they will be engaged in the project.

4. The maximum stipend available for participation in this project is \$50,000. Please provide a budget narrative describing how much money your system is requesting for these activities and how that money will be spent. Considerations include: supporting affiliate system and/or partner staff time, anticipated resources needed to complete activities, etc. Please include how additional funds would be spent if awarded. (upload accompanying full budget below).
5. Upload detailed line-item budget (required). Upload any additional attachments you would like to share to support your project application (optional).