



# INSPIRING

A NEW GENERATION OF **LEARNING**



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2021-2022 ANNUAL REPORT

## Dear Friends:

**A**s we look back on our 15th school year in operation, we reflect on a year that has truly inspired a new generation of learning, both within our organization and across the state. We are more committed than ever to making preschool possible for Denver's young learners and creating a more equitable and just early education landscape. Our organization is entering a time of exciting growth. After investing deeply in the unmet needs in our community this year, we have a more attuned focus on removing the long-standing barriers for our families of color and families living in areas of concentrated disadvantage. The opportunity for impact is monumental, and we take our role as a leader in the early childhood education space seriously. Equally as important to us is continuing to foster our trusted partnerships with our amazing providers and collaborators at the state and national level.

As always, at our core, we are in service to our families and our providers. We are committed to listening, expanding and amplifying the voices we look to for feedback and insight, and sharing our learnings to increase the understanding of the importance of early childhood more broadly. We are prepared for growth as well as whatever challenges may lay ahead. With the support of the Denver community, we are committed to making Denver's early childhood system one of the strongest, most equitable, and of the highest quality in the country. Please enjoy the 2021-2022 Impact Report, one which highlights our work to inspire a new generation of impact. We hope you will join us in looking forward to what we envision will be our most exciting year yet.



*Elsa Holguín*  
**Elsa Holguín**  
President and CEO



*Michael Baker*  
**Michael Baker**  
Board Chair 2021-22

### NEW MISSION

To transform the futures of young children and their families by strengthening and funding the early childhood experience.

### NEW VISION

Every Denver child has access to a strong foundation to thrive in kindergarten and beyond.



Look for this symbol throughout the report for a **DIVERSITY, EQUITY, and INCLUSION highlight!**

**Denver Preschool Program (DPP) began in 2006 as a voter-approved sales tax so every child in Denver has the opportunity to access a quality early education of their family's choice.**

Children who attend an early childhood education program are more prepared for kindergarten, leading to stronger early language, literacy and math skills, and a higher likelihood of graduating high school, attending college, and succeeding in their careers. After 15 years, DPP knows our holistic approach to early childhood education is critical to achieving the change Denver children and families deserve and the successes we have achieved thus far.



## CELEBRATING **OUR TEAM**

**The heart of Denver Preschool Program has always been our staff and community. We are proud of the recognition that our talented team has received in the past year. Here are just a few highlights:**

**Elsa Holguín** was honored by the Colorado Women's Chamber of Commerce as one of the 'Top 25 Most Powerful Women.'

**Elsa Holguín** received the Lena Archuleta Education Award, which is presented to an individual who works to educate our community through research that guides policy, increases awareness, and stimulates action.

**Elsa Holguín** was named the Denver Business Journal's Most Admired CEO of 2022.

**Dr. Lydia Prado**, DPP Board Chair, was named 9News Leader of the Year.

**Anna Jo Haynes**, Board Emeritus, was awarded a Lifetime Achievement Award from Girl Scouts of America.

DPP welcomed two new staff members in 2022: **Irene Bonham**, Director of Communications and Community Engagement; and **Rebekah Ray**, Director of Finance.



## FOUNDATIONAL PROGRAMS

# Expanding the Power of Preschool

**Denver Preschool Program's core purpose has been, and always will be, to make sure every child in Denver enters kindergarten ready to reach their full potential.**

In the 2021-2022 school year, that meant focusing on equity within our enrollment processes, investing in the early education workforce, and expanding our community outreach efforts striving to reach every Denver family. Below are the statistics and successes within our core programs.

## TUITION CREDITS

DPP makes the power of preschool accessible and affordable for all Denver families by offering tuition credits paid directly to the school on the family's behalf. Tuition credits are available to families who enroll in any licensed, participating early childhood education program across Denver, including Denver Public Schools classrooms, community-based providers, and family child care homes.



**The most significant credits go to families who have been historically under-resourced who have a child attending a high-quality preschool for the longest duration.**

**DIVERSITY | EQUITY | INCLUSION**  
HIGHLIGHT

## 2021-2022 TUITION CREDITS BY THE NUMBERS:

DPP DELIVERED MORE THAN

**\$18.3M**

in tuition credits directly to providers on behalf of families

DPP FUNDED

**4,706**

eligible beneficiaries

AVERAGE FUNDING FOR 4-YEAR-OLDS:

**\$788/MO**



**55%**

**OF DPP STUDENTS**

were at or below 185% of federal poverty level

DENVER PUBLIC SCHOOLS PRESCHOOLS RECEIVED

**\$9.2M**

IN TUITION CREDITS

COMMUNITY SITES RECEIVED

**\$9M**

IN TUITION CREDITS

## QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

While ensuring more children have access to early childhood education is critical, research shows that the quality of the program impacts the benefits that students receive in both the short and long-term. From student assessments to professional development and incentive awards for preschool teachers, investing in the quality of Denver preschool providers is an essential part of improving the experience and future outcomes for Denver's students.

By utilizing the state's Colorado Shines quality rating and improvement system, DPP tracks quality and supports providers as they continue to improve programs and processes to serve Denver's children better. As of fall 2022, 17 of 262 DPP sites were rated Level 5 through Colorado Shines, the highest rating possible. On average, 5-6 new DPP providers achieve a Level 5 rating every year, an incredible achievement for these providers.

### 2021-2022 QUALITY IMPROVEMENT BY THE NUMBERS:



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“I would like to thank DPP for all of the hard work and ongoing support that your team has given our program within the past years. We are truly seeing such wonderful enrollments in both our 3 and 4 year old preschool students. The financial support as well as training, monetary incentives, and community support have been a blessing to us in so many ways.”

– DPP PROVIDER

## WORKFORCE STIPENDS

In partnership with Denver's Office of Children's Affairs (OCA), Denver Preschool Program offered stipends to support the financial well-being of educators and acknowledge their critical work to support Denver children and families. The stipends were intended to show appreciation to staff and teachers for their amazing work.

**\$402,475 issued**

**Workforce Stipends & Grants**

(\$272,025 funded by DPP; \$130,450 funded by OCA)

**Total Recipients:**

**1,763 staff members  
across 153 preschools**

## COMMUNITY OUTREACH

To meet families where they are, DPP outreach staff are in-person at local events across the metro area or work to share information via partnerships with community-based organizations, in places of worship, at cultural events or food distribution sites, among many others.



**Denver Preschool Program's community outreach is focused on connecting with families – particularly those with the greatest financial need – at a grassroots level.**

**DIVERSITY | EQUITY | INCLUSION**  
HIGHLIGHT

**Community Outreach Successes include:**

**72 total events,**  
with a total attendance of **605,000 people** and more than **10,000 people** stopping at the DPP booths

**Reached Latinx families through a Promotores program,**

which included door-to-door canvassing of Denver neighborhoods with a high percentage of monolingual Spanish speakers

**Top 3 Events:**  
**Cinco de Mayo**  
**Dragon Boat Festival**  
**Juneteenth**

**As added support, a Preschool Navigator**  
was available to provide one-on-one assistance to families trying to find a preschool or enrolling their child.

**Supported 12 Community Connectors**  
who speak **nine languages** collectively

**Utilized social media platforms**  
to reach families through private groups and hosting Facebook Live events/ interviews

“I wish you could have seen the sincere ‘thank you’ from all of our teachers. From hugs to tears of joy, you all know how to bring out the best in us. We all know that our valued teachers are underpaid and overworked in many instances, so I am truly thankful for our partnership.” – **DPP WORKFORCE STIPEND RECIPIENT**

## DPP FAMILY STORY

# DPP Tuition Credits Help ECE Teacher Ditch Second Job



**Abbey Homberger always knew she wanted to be a teacher.**

While she originally went to college for elementary education, she found herself working in early childhood education and was quickly hooked.

“I’m fascinated by child development and saw working in early childhood education as a great fit between my passions,” she said. “Being one of the first teachers in a child’s life is such an incredible opportunity.”

Abbey was in school for early childhood education but took a break to get married and have her twin boys, Luke and Lennon, who were born prematurely at 30 weeks. Once the boys were home, Abbey returned to school and work, eventually landing at Fisher Early Learning Center. Her sons are both on the autism spectrum, and Abbey was committed to getting them into Fisher as she knew her sons would get the attention and services they needed. But to do so, Abbey had to pick up a second job working as a driver for DoorDash so she could afford tuition for her sons.

“All of my paycheck from Fisher would go straight to tuition,” she said. “My husband and I had no idea what childcare costs.”

Fast forward to 2022: Abbey’s sons are four and eligible for DPP tuition credits. Abbey no longer has to work for DoorDash and has funds every month for extra activities for her children. Abbey had not heard about DPP until she started working in early childhood education.

“DPP tuition credits have changed our lives,” Abbey said. “My kids are in high-quality preschool, and I get to spend more time with them, rather than working a second job.”

**!!! The median wage for preschool teachers in Colorado is \$15.25/hour. The average DoorDash driver in Denver makes \$22/hour.**

Sources: <https://cscce.berkeley.edu/workforce-index-2020/states/colorado/>, [https://www.glassdoor.com/Hourly-Pay/DoorDash-Delivery-Driver-Denver-Hourly-Pay-EJI\\_IE813073.08\\_RO9.24\\_IL.25.31\\_IM234.htm](https://www.glassdoor.com/Hourly-Pay/DoorDash-Delivery-Driver-Denver-Hourly-Pay-EJI_IE813073.08_RO9.24_IL.25.31_IM234.htm)



## PILOT PROGRAMS

# Addressing Unmet Needs

Denver Preschool Program's fiscal responsibility to the Denver community goes well beyond tuition credits. By strategically using reserves, DPP can test pilot programs to address new opportunities and ensure every child in Denver has a jumpstart on quality education.

In addition to exploring expanded offerings for families, our pilots also seek ways to strengthen the early childhood education workforce through innovative practices, funding models, and partnerships that help hire, support, and retain directors, family child care home providers, classroom teachers, and support staff.

### PRESCHOOL FOR 3s

DPP is thrilled to have completed a successful launch of Preschool for 3s in the 2021-2022 school year! Preschool for 3s created a continuum of support for families and is also an exciting step in a larger early childhood education plan for Denver.



For DPP, equitable access to preschool is paramount, so families who demonstrate the greatest need are given priority in the program, creating access for students who may not have attended preschool and giving them the jumpstart to a successful early childhood education experience (DPP defines its support tiers by the federal poverty level model).

DIVERSITY | EQUITY | INCLUSION  
HIGHLIGHT

## PRESCHOOL FOR 3s BY THE NUMBERS:

DPP AWARDED MORE THAN  
**\$2.6 million** in Preschool For 3s  
tuition credits to **355** total recipients

**262**

**TIER 1  
RECIPIENTS**  
(100% Federal Poverty Level)

**93**

**TIER 2  
RECIPIENTS**  
(At or below 185% of the  
federal poverty level)

## DPP SCHOLARSHIP



DPP's Scholarship program addresses the affordability of preschool tuition for families at 300% or below the Federal Poverty Level.

DIVERSITY | EQUITY | INCLUSION  
HIGHLIGHT

Through the program, DPP offered full scholarships to families with the highest financial need, making their family contribution for preschool tuition zero. The scholarship made it possible for these families to use funds they may have otherwise used on preschool tuition to afford other essential needs like rent and food.

### DPP SCHOLARSHIP BY THE NUMBERS:

DPP awarded more than  
**\$2.3M**  
IN DPP SCHOLARSHIP FUNDS  
in the 2021-2022 school year

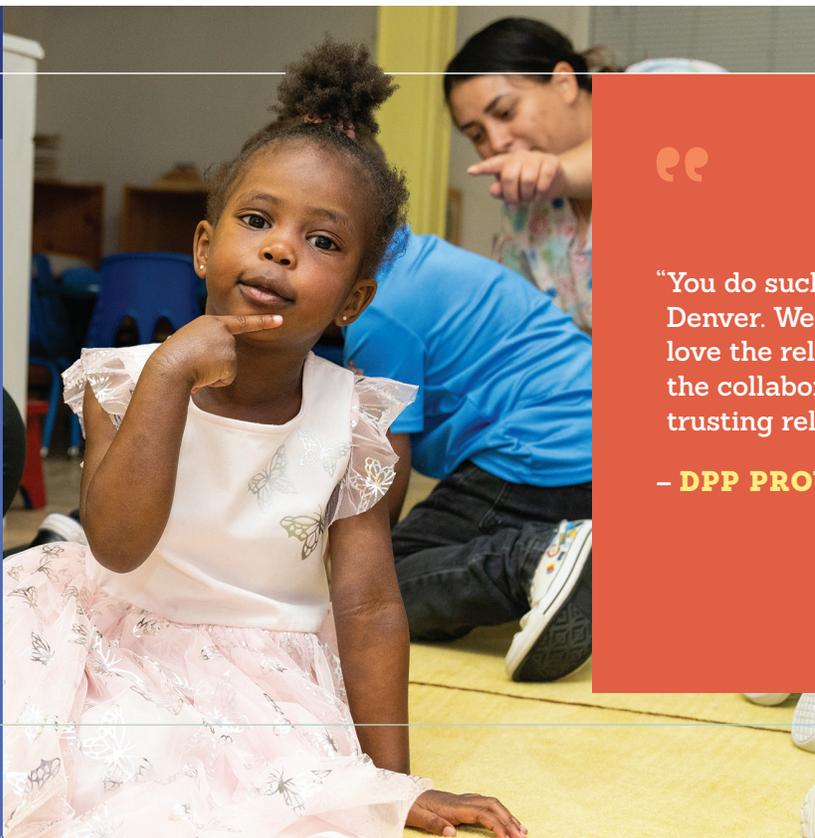
Total  
SCHOLARSHIP FUND  
Recipients  
**339**

Average monthly  
FAMILY INCOME  
**\$2,500**

Average monthly  
PRESCHOOL TUITION  
**\$1,485**

AVERAGE DPP TUITION CREDIT  
**(\$788)**  
combined with +  
AVERAGE SCHOLARSHIP  
**(\$700)**

OUT OF POCKET  
for families:  
**\$0**



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“You do such a beautiful job of managing things here in Denver. We feel successful and well-supported by DPP and love the relationship that you’ve built with providers and the collaborative way that you improve quality through trusting relationships, collaboration, and coaching.”

– DPP PROVIDER



## RETURN ON INVESTMENT

# Paving the Path for Progress

It's hard to believe that the first beneficiaries of the Denver Preschool Program have entered college. Going forward this gives the organization new data proving that DPP's support of quality early education programs have a positive long-term impact on student achievement. We are proud to share highlights of this early data, which demonstrates DPP is one of the strongest, most equitable, and of the highest quality programs in the country.



**Participating in DPP resulted in significant gains for children with respect to kindergarten readiness, including higher early literacy skills, higher social-emotional skills, and fewer problems with self-management. This is especially true for students who have been historically underserved.**

DIVERSITY | EQUITY | INCLUSION  
HIGHLIGHT

### 10 years of data

DPP students are more likely to read at their grade level, miss fewer days of school, and progress without having to skip a year compared to non-DPP students

### 84% of DPP students

did not have impulse or behavioral management concerns

### 79% of DPP students

of DPP students scored better on a composite measure of children's initiative, self-regulation, and positive attachment relations

### 73% of DPP students

scored better on recognizing printed letters and words

## STRENGTHENING EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION THROUGH COLLABORATION

# UPK Colorado & DPP

**Denver Preschool Program is pleased to lead Denver's implementation of Universal Preschool (UPK) Colorado as the Local Coordinating Organization (LCO) for the City and County of Denver.**

With these two programs working together, more children across our state will have access to high-quality preschool. UPK Colorado will complement DPP's proven tuition credit and quality improvement programs.

### **A few highlights of UPK Colorado so far:**

- Denver families are projected to have access to at least \$4,883 of UPK Colorado support between August 2023 – May 2024, in addition to DPP's year-round tuition support.
- As Denver's LCO, DPP has entered into a partnership with key early childhood education organizations like Denver's Early Childhood Council, Denver Human Services, The Mayor's Office of Children's Affairs, Denver Public Schools, family resource centers, and several providers to support our collective goal that UPK Colorado benefits our entire community as equitably as possible.
- DPP is the conduit between the state, providers, and families. We will continue to listen to concerns, proactively help to train our community on new systems, and push for the answers to the most critical questions.

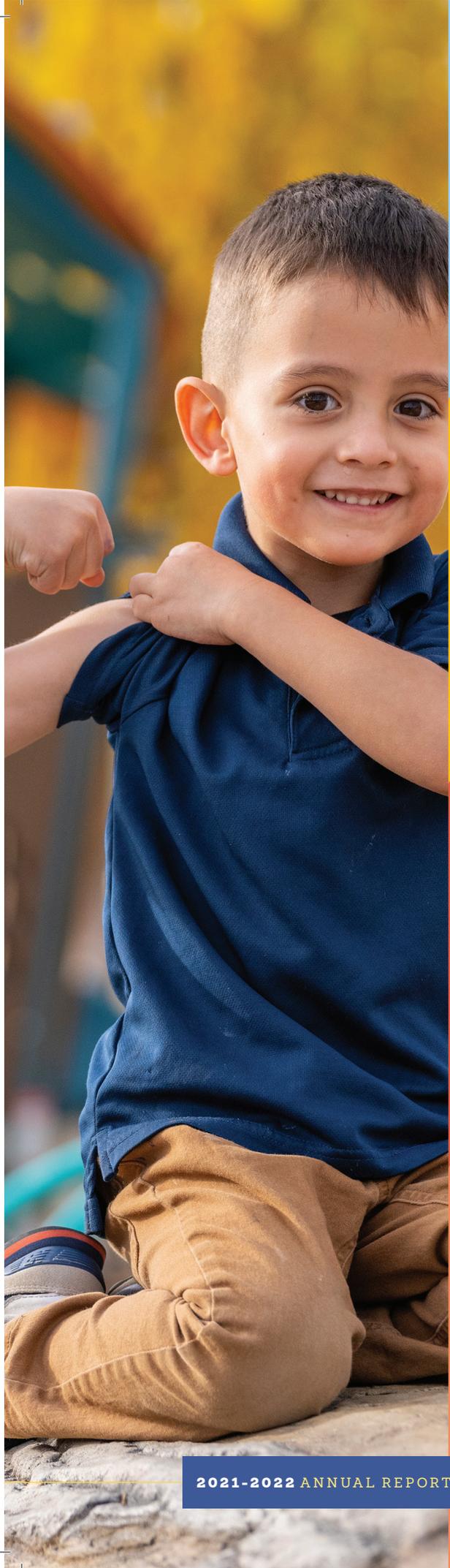


**Thanks to UPK Colorado, many Denver families will receive full preschool tuition support for their 4-year-olds since DPP tuition credit can be combined with the state program. DPP's Preschool for 3s pilot program further supports historically under resourced families demonstrating our vision that every child enters kindergarten ready to reach their full potential.**

DIVERSITY | EQUITY | INCLUSION  
HIGHLIGHT

- With two years of preschool funding leading into Colorado's full-day kindergarten launch in fall of 2019, many of Denver's youngest children will now receive three years of early childhood education funding.
- Supporting UPK Colorado is consistent with DPP's mission and the intention of voters who twice passed the Denver Preschool Tax to help make early childhood education possible for kids.

DPP is uncompromising in our commitment to our value of leadership in action. We will continue to advocate for additional funding for early childhood education in our community, support policies and funding that impact the workforce of educators and their livelihood, and welcome the opportunity to share our leadership and learnings.



# PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

## DPP's New Strategic Plan

**Now well into our second decade of impact, Denver Preschool Program is not merely focused on the mission but proactively paving the way for significant, equitable advancements in early childhood education, local, statewide and across the nation.**

We take our role as a leader and one of the original early childhood tuition programs in the nation seriously. While there is much to learn from what we have done, there is also more to learn and improve upon as we look ahead. We are inspired by the progress and poised for what is to come.

## 2017-2022: → DPP'S RECENT JOURNEY

## 2023-2025: DPP'S FRONTIER

DPP defined and began activating our value around intentional inclusivity, where DPP overcomes barriers to ensure equitable opportunity for all children to participate in early childhood education.

**DPP centers all aspects of our work in equity.** Promoting and operationalizing equity is the foundational element of all programs, partnerships, and policies. DPP is committed to bold action through our role in early childhood education to help eliminate differences in educational, well-being, and health outcomes due to systemic racism, generational poverty, and discrimination.

DPP initiated programs and approaches to increase the number of Denver's young children participating in preschool.

DPP increases enrollment in educational opportunities for Denver's **three and four-year-olds, specifically among children of color and children with significant barriers to attending preschool.**

DPP focused on strengthening Denver's early childhood education workforce by supporting preschool professionals to ensure they are well-qualified, effective, compensated, and valued.

DPP strengthens the early childhood education workforce through innovative practices, funding models, and partnerships that **help hire, support, and retain directors, family childcare home providers, classroom teachers, and support staff.**

DPP responded to community needs and championed, advocated, and partnered to advance early childhood education policies and strategies that help our youngest learners succeed.

DPP continues to grow internal and external resources to strengthen the early childhood system and meet Denver's early childhood education needs and opportunities.

DPP improved and helped measure the quality of early childhood education programs in Denver.

DPP is engaged in continuous improvement around quality and how quality learning environments impact results for children. In addition, DPP is achieving its goals through cross-cutting strategies that include **inclusive and equitable evaluation, family and provider engagement, and ensuring strong infrastructure and governance as DPP grows.**



## Join Us!

**For 15 years, DPP has been at the forefront of early childhood education, and we fully intend to continue to lead the way.** You can play an important role in ensuring that we continue the momentum. Here are two things you can do today:

- If you are an early care and education provider, sign up for our provider newsletter to stay up-to-date on the early childhood landscape and DPP's programs and initiatives.
- Refer friends and family who might be eligible to apply for DPP tuition credits. As a bonus, we'll reward you for helping spread the word about how easy it is to apply for tuition credits from DPP. Receive a \$20 gift card as thank you.

## CONTACT INFO

 [DPP.ORG](http://DPP.ORG)

 [facebook.com/DenverPreschoolProgram](https://facebook.com/DenverPreschoolProgram)

 [twitter.com/dpp\\_org](https://twitter.com/dpp_org)

 [instagram.com/DenverPreschoolProgram](https://instagram.com/DenverPreschoolProgram)

### Marketing and Communications Contact:

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**General Inquiries:** [info@dpp.org](mailto:info@dpp.org)

**Visit:** 305 Park Ave West Ste B | Denver CO 80205

**Application:** P.O. Box 40037, Denver, CO 80204-0037

## 2022 CALENDAR YEAR AUDITED FINANCIALS

● Tuition Credits	<b>\$22,050,505</b>
● Quality Improvements	<b>\$2,537,252</b>
● Evaluation	<b>\$869,468</b>
● Outreach	<b>\$862,363</b>
● Family Eligibility	<b>\$858,185</b>
● Contract Services	<b>\$227,235</b>
● Administrative	<b>\$1,373,502</b>



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**Chris Miller**

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**Carley Noerr**

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