

Smart Beginnings NRV, New River Valley Early Childhood Needs Assessment Strategic Plan

Purpose:

Smart Beginnings NRV will conduct a fiscal map of the NRV region to establish a baseline measurement for resources being invested in early childhood (ages 0-4). A fiscal map, not an actual map, is a tool that provides a detailed accounting of all federal, state, local, and philanthropic expenditures on programs supporting children and youth. A fiscal map can be used to develop strategies based on the adequacy, flexibility, and stability of existing funding.

Additionally, Smart Beginnings NRV will initiate data-sharing agreements with the school districts of the region. The agreements will allow a newly formed regional stakeholder group to track children's progress through elementary school, and drawing correlations between early childhood experiences, quality early childhood education, and later educational performance.

The Early Childhood Needs Assessment will provide a comprehensive overview of how resource deployment is affecting kindergarten readiness in the region, and how new and/or existing resources can be most effectively utilized in the NRV.

Smart Beginnings Leadership Council: Comprised of seventeen area leaders representative of each of the five counties/city in the Smart Beginnings NRV footprint. The Leadership Council will provide guidance and support for the New River Valley Early Childhood Needs-Based Strategic Plan.

Needs Assessment Plan Advisory Committee: After the launch of the project, and with input from the Leadership Council, the Smart Beginnings Coordinator will invite area partners to form the advisory committee. Members will be representatives from area agencies involved in early childhood work, including but not limited to: Head Start, Virginia Quality, the Children's Health Improvement Program, Virginia Preschool Initiative programs and locally, the Alliance for Better Childcare Strategies (ABC's). This committee will meet monthly throughout the duration of the project. The committee's primary mission will be to leverage their contacts to support the Smart Beginnings Coordinator in completing the strategic plan, and use their expertise in the field of early childhood to assist in the development of survey instruments and other tools necessary for the completion of the New River Valley Early Childhood Needs Assessment.

Outputs:

Produce a report that: 1) identifies primary funding sources of early childhood programming in the New River Valley; 2) a guide for current organizations to leverage their resources with improved outcomes; and 3) demonstrates the extent to which correlations exist between quality early childhood educational experiences and improved educational achievement in elementary school children living in the region.

Smart Beginnings NRV will make all findings available for the public, barring any individual identifiers or confidential data. In particular, this information will be used to support the Wage Subsidy Grant currently being administered by New River Community College, which has a goal of upskilling the early childhood workforce and increasing teacher retention rates.

Work Plan for this proposal:

January 2018- Project Development

- Meet 1-on-1 with superintendents from each school district within the region to gauge interest in data work, and to understand what kind of data work the schools would find most helpful
- Staff and a Leadership Council member will meet with Roanoke City Schools to review methodology and findings of a recent data sharing agreement with Smart Beginnings of Greater Roanoke
- Identify and invite regional partners to participate in the fiscal mapping project and serve on Advisory Committee
- Participate in John Morgan's Introduction to Fiscal Mapping webinar on 1/25/18 from 2:00 to 3:00

February 2018- Project implementation

- Review best practices and methodology (contact a minimum of two representatives who have completed fiscal mapping projects for early childhood education)
- Pre-kick-off survey of partners for data needs
- Project kick-off meeting with Advisory Committee: describe what a fiscal map is and how it can be useful to early childhood leaders and advocates, along with the intent of the Needs-Based Strategic Plan
- Develop an inventory of organizations involved in early childhood in region to be surveyed
- Attend VECF's Innovative Partnership meeting by Zoom on 2/6/18 from 1:00 to 3:30 to engage with VECF Innovative Partnership grantees, staff and consultants regarding early childhood data collection and analysis in Virginia and data-informed decision making (would suggest that SBNRV Coordinator and at least one other regional commission staff person attend). Invitations to Zoom into the meeting will be distributed next week.
- Participate in VECF's Early Childhood Fiscal Mapping learning table (two sessions) in February.

March 2018- Survey creation and MOU development

- Develop fiscal map survey and early childhood workforce survey to identify historical and current investments in early childhood education via Survey Monkey platform.
- Convene meeting with superintendents from NRV schools and the Leadership Council
- Invite NRV school districts to enter into data sharing agreement
- Distribute financing and early childhood workforce survey to identified organizations
- Attend VECF's Innovative Partnership meeting by Zoom on 3/7/18 from 1:00 to 3:30 to engage with VECF Innovative Partnership grantees, staff and consultants regarding early childhood data collection and analysis in Virginia and data-informed decision making.

June 2018- Data collection, analysis, and Interim Report

- Collect signed MOUs from all school districts
- Compile survey information by funding source and program target area(s)
- Collect data from NRV area school districts
- Map current funding and assess gaps
- Advisory committee meeting: project check-in and preliminary results; clarify goals and data uses

- Develop interim report on initial findings of needs assessment (2-4 page with consumer oriented layout).
- Meet with area stakeholders including: Smart Beginnings Leadership Council, Needs Assessment Advisory Committee, and school superintendents to present findings of interim report and receive input on next steps, including identification of further information to be collected.

Costs by Activity/Strategy:

Activity/Strategy	Timing	VECF Cost	NRVRC Cost	Total Project
Project Development	February 2018	\$2,175	\$1,100	\$3,275
Project Implementation	February 2018	\$2,175	\$1,100	\$3,275
Survey Creation and MOU Development	March 2018	\$13,000	\$6,000	\$19,000
Data Collection & Interim Report	June 2018	\$15,150	\$6,800	\$21,950
Total Anticipated Cost:		\$32,500	\$15,000	\$47,500
		<i>request</i>		

Cost Proposal Breakdown:

- Anticipated Personnel Costs (Salary/Fringe): \$28,750

Position	Hours
Smart Beginnings Coordinator	100
NRVRC Executive Director	50
NRVRC Deputy Executive Director	30
Regional Planner II	160
Regional Planner I	175
Data Systems Manager	60
Total Hours:	575
<i>Smart Beginnings Coordinator Additional Time (in-kind):</i>	<i>550</i>

- Anticipated Contractual Costs for Data Analysis: \$1,500
- Anticipated Costs for Business Meetings/Supplies: \$750
- Anticipated Costs for Travel: \$1,500
- Anticipated in-kind match: \$15,000 (current VECF program)

Project Outcomes:

1. Smart Beginnings NRV will issue an interim report with findings from the needs assessment. This report will be distributed to area partners and community members and will be created in a 2-4 page consumer oriented layout.
2. Smart Beginnings NRV will host an interim meeting with regional stakeholders including the Leadership Council, Advisory Committee, and school superintendents. This meeting will serve provide an update on the findings of the needs assessment, solidify area partnerships and community buy-in to the systems building model of Smart Beginnings NRV, and provide input and guidance from area partners on the progress and direction of the New River Valley Early Childhood Needs Assessment.

Integrated into Work Plan for Smart Beginnings FY19

August 2018- Data Analysis and initial reporting

- Analyze data from school districts and finance survey
- Estimate fiscal needs of region, map current funding and assess gaps
- Identify potential follow-up survey questions

October 2018- Work plan development, call to action development

- Advisory committee meeting: review portfolio investments, identify opportunities to increase collaboration, and develop strategies to maximize funding opportunities and communicate needs that attract additional investments
- Develop a work plan and call to action with advisory committee input

December 2018- Final Report

- Needs assessment report to regional partners and stakeholders: present findings of fiscal map, data-sharing, workforce survey, and preliminary work plan outcomes, present call to action, issue recommendations.
- Provide education and outreach materials for regional partners (i.e. presentation, brochures, website graphics/dashboards, etc.)
- Work with partners to identify strategies and opportunities, and a responsible lead agency

Project Outcomes:

1. Smart Beginnings NRV will issue a final report and recommendations for the community. This report will be presented at a regional convening to be held at the project's conclusion. Report will also be distributed to all local, state and federal elected officials, along with their staff. An executive summary and complimentary Powerpoint presentation will be developed.
2. Smart Beginnings will build capacity in the region by convening a working group of area leaders and service providers to address the findings of the plan.
3. Using the findings of this report, Smart Beginnings NRV will identify areas of need, and produce a call to action for area leaders and service providers, based on strategies with demonstrated success in other regions, best practices from other Smart Beginnings cohorts, and input from community members. Smart Beginnings NRV will drive an approach that meets the need of the community, may be replicable to meet similar needs in other communities, and is innovative in its approach to addressing the specific problems faced by the region.

Costs by Activity/Strategy:

Activity/Strategy	Timing	VECF Cost	NRVRC Cost	Total Project
Data Analysis	August 2018	\$0	\$3,000	\$3,000
Work plan and call to action development	October 2018	\$0	\$3,000	\$3,000
Final Report	December 2018	\$0	\$5,000	\$5,000
Total Anticipated Cost:		\$0	\$11,000	\$11,000
FY 18 Costs:		\$32,500	\$15,000	\$47,500
Total Project Costs:		\$32,500	\$26,000	\$58,500

Cost Proposal Breakdown:

- Anticipated Personnel Costs (Salary/Fringe): \$11,000 and nearly 600 hours