



Montana Early Childhood Account (MECA) Grant Communication Plan

Final Draft for Board Review

Purpose

Provide clear, broad, and consistent communication about MECA grant opportunities to early childhood providers, partners, and the public. This plan ensures transparency, accessibility, and equity in how information is shared statewide.

Objectives

- Ensure all eligible early childhood providers receive timely, understandable grant information.
- Provide multiple communication pathways to reach diverse audiences across Montana.
- Maintain transparency with the MECA Board, stakeholders, and the public.
- Support equitable participation by removing communication barriers.
- Strengthen trust in the MECA process through reliable and proactive outreach.

Key Audiences

- Licensed child care providers: centers, groups, and family homes
- Early Head Start and Head Start programs
- Tribal early childhood programs and Native community partners
- School district early childhood programs
- Family, friend, and neighbor caregivers
- Local early childhood coalitions and community organizations
- Families and the general public
- MECA Board and agency leadership
- Early childhood contractors /partners

Core Messages

- Purpose and goals of MECA grants
- Eligibility and allowable uses
- Application timelines and steps
- Technical assistance available



- Award notifications and follow-up expectations
- Where and how to access ongoing updates
- Emphasis on equity, quality improvement, and community impact

Communication Channels

Email Communication

- Notices to all licensed providers via the CCL listserv
- Updates distributed through partner networks and associations
- Scheduled MECA Board communication briefings

Website and Online Resources

- Centralized MECA webpage with application links, timelines, FAQs, documents, and recorded webinars
- Dedicated “Grant Updates” page for current announcements
- Technical assistance availability

Partner Networks

- ECSB contractors – Zero to Five Montana, SPARK Montana, ECP, CCT, and UM-Western
- Tribal government partners
- OPI early childhood staff
- Community coalitions, economic development organizations, and family-serving agencies
- Other community and statewide entities that work with Child Care

Public Outreach

- Press releases prior to and at grant launch
- Shareable social media graphics and announcements via DPHHS platforms
- Printed materials for libraries, community centers, and partner agencies
- Materials available in additional languages when requested

Technical Assistance and Engagement

- Weekly virtual office hours during application windows
- Recorded webinars: grant overview, application walkthrough, budget guidance
- Dedicated email inbox for provider questions
- Frequently Asked Questions updated throughout the cycle
- Mechanism for feedback on communication clarity, accessibility, and timeliness



Communication Timeline

Pre-Launch

- Advance notice to providers and partners
- Overview of anticipated timeline and eligibility
- Early posting of FAQs and expectations

Launch Week

- Official public announcement and press release
- Email blast with direct links and instructions
- First informational webinar posted online
- Open technical assistance session schedule published

Application Period

- Weekly reminders via email and web updates
- Additional Q&A opportunities
- Updates to FAQs addressing common provider questions
- Social media reminders at key intervals

Post-Award

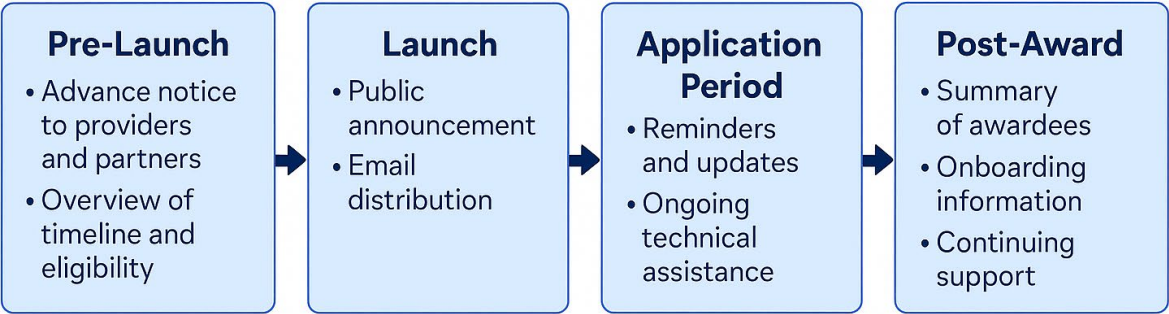
- Provider onboarding communication for reporting and expectations
- Continued technical assistance for implementation
- Reflection feedback process to improve future communication cycles

Monitoring and Continuous Improvement

- Track effectiveness of communication channels
- Evaluate webinar attendance and provider feedback
- Adjust communication strategies based on barriers identified
- Provide a brief communication summary to the MECA Board after each grant cycle



Montana Early Childhood Account (MECA) Grant Communication Workflow



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