



# MONTANA EARLY CHILDHOOD ACCOUNT (MECA) FUNDING DECISION FRAMEWORK

This framework guides the MECA Board in evaluating funding opportunities to ensure investments align with legislative intent, strategic priorities, and desired outcomes for Montana's early childhood system.

## STEP 1: ELIGIBILITY SCREENING

1. Does the proposal align with the MECA Strategic Plan?
  - Yes → Continue
  - No → Do Not Fund
    - a. Strategic plan objective impacted:
  
2. Does the proposal meet the intent of the authorizing legislation?
  - Yes → Continue
  - No → Do Not Fund
    - a. Eligible use impacted:

## STEP 2: INVESTMENT ASSESSMENT

1. What is the desired outcome?
  - Improved access to services
  - Improved quality of services
  - Workforce development
  - Retention of Staff
  - Systems improvement
  - Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Expected impact:

2. Is the investment intended to be:
  - Short-Term Solution (One-Time Funding)
  - Long-Term System Investment (Ongoing Funding)

Sustainability plan (if applicable):



3. Who receives the investment?

- Children and Families
- Regional/Community-Based Populations (e.g. Coalitions)
- Specific Target Populations
- Early Childhood Facilities
- Early Childhood Childcare Workers
- Early Childhood Early Intervention
- Early Childhood System Infrastructure
- Other:

4. What funding approach is most appropriate?

- Competitive Grant Process
- Non-Competitive Grant Process
- Direct Investment to Existing Early Childhood Services (e.g. Apprenticeship)
- Contract with Outside Agency for Services

### **STEP 3: BOARD RECOMMENDATION**

Considering strategic alignment, legislative intent, anticipated impact, sustainability, and beneficiaries:

- Fund
- Fund with Conditions
- Request Additional Information
- Do Not Fund

**Notes**

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