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How workforce registries benefit the early care & education workforce

Stories of workforce data and data-informed decisionmaking across states

A brief developed at the request of Montgomery Moving Forward
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Campaign

Introduction: ECE workforce data that meets people's information needs

People within and beyond the Maryland early care & education (ECE) community need better workforce data. ECE professionals play a critical role in serving Maryland's children and families and sustaining a healthy economy, but meaningfully supporting them and their work requires more data-informed decisionmaking. ECE workforce data tends to be fragmented, inaccessible, incomplete, and out-of-date—and thus not useful to people wanting to enter the workforce, current professionals seeking to advance their practices and careers, ECE and other employers interested in recruiting and retaining workers, or state and local leaders responsible for maintaining an ECE ecosystem that sustains the workforce and ensures its well-being. Creating accurate, timely, and comprehensive workforce information for these decisionmakers remains a persistent challenge, though one not unique to Maryland.

ECE workforce registries are helping address this challenge in other states. Maryland is one of only five states without a registry, which are data systems that collect, connect, store, and make securely available general ECE workforce data on professionals' demography, employment, training & education, credentials, competency, and career & professional development.¹ Serving as one-stop data shops, registries facilitate turning integrated workforce data into more useful information that better meets the needs of professionals themselves, policymakers, and others in the ECE community.

More than just data systems, workforce registries are designed to actively support ECE professionals and their work. The essential framework from the National Workforce Registry Alliance (NWRA) defines four essential components for registries: Broadly, registries are user-centered and accessible online; they validate and verify worker qualifications; they integrate workforce data and relevant processes across state systems; and they adhere to high standards of data quality.² That is, registries bring together high-quality information and resources to help meet professionals' evolving responsibilities and needs. Registry structures and specific functions vary by state and need, but common functions include digital profiles for professionals, training calendars, and qualification & training approval.

Investing in a workforce registry is now an imperative in Maryland. During times of political and structural change, as Maryland coalesces and strengthens its ECE workforce systems, better supporting the well-being and development of professionals across settings and understanding statewide and local workforce patterns grows increasingly important. These efforts should be informed by high-quality data, which means building and enhancing the necessary data infrastructure—like a registry—and related data governance and practices.

¹ "Member Profiles", National Workforce Registry Alliance, accessed December 3, 2025, <https://www.registryalliance.org/member-profiles/>.

² "Early Childhood & Out-of-School-Time Workforce Data, Examining Workforce Registry Infrastructure for Data Impact," National Workforce Registry Alliance, March 2024, 7, accessed December 3, 2025, <https://www.registryalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/NWRA-Workforce-Registry-Brief-2024-1.pdf>.

Improving ECE workforce data in Maryland

Fortunately, Maryland leaders can look for inspiration from exemplary work elsewhere, as states across the country are benefiting from concerted, sustained investments in workforce registries. Diverse ECE decisionmakers are using registries and registry data to deliver high-quality professional development opportunities, support physical and mental health, encourage higher wages and greater retention, and create systems-level views of workforce pathways and trends—all towards strengthening the ECE workforce and its capacity to serve to children, families, and communities. Specifically, workforce registries are helping decisionmakers:

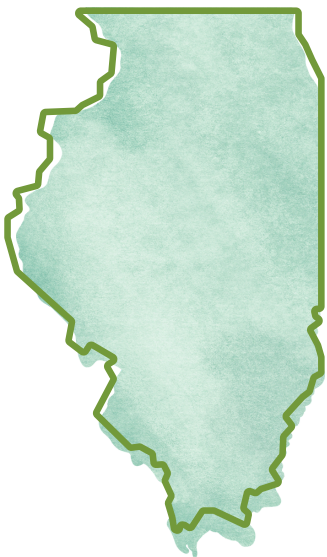
- Design and implement a workforce grant program in Illinois;
- Streamline professional pathways in Nebraska;
- Set the stage for statewide workforce initiatives in Nevada;
- Increase access to professional development in New York;
- Grow understanding of workforce compensation patterns in South Carolina; and
- Build a suite of dynamic workforce data tools in Texas.

Developed on behalf of Montgomery Moving Forward (MMF), a collective-impact initiative based in Montgomery County, Maryland, this brief compiles short stories showing how these six states are using their workforce registries to promote better data and more data-informed decisionmaking. Based on insights drawn from interviews with a registry leader in each state, the stories highlight benefits that registries have provided to people within and beyond ECE—professionals, policymakers, state and local leaders, and others—with different information needs. In sum, they provide realistic examples for Maryland leaders to consider as they pursue registry planning efforts moving forward.

Stories of workforce data and data-informed decisionmaking across states

The following six stories highlight how states across the country are benefiting from their respective workforce registries. Each story focuses on a specific benefit named by a registry leader as being particularly meaningful to their state and its ECE workforce. The benefits are largely qualitative, though quantified where possible. Note that the language and labels (e.g., in Nevada, the use of early childhood education and care (ECEC) versus ECE) used here reflect different state contexts and thus may differ from what is used in Maryland.

Awarding workforce grants to ECE programs to raise wages and quality in Illinois



Illinois is using data from the state’s Gateways Registry (Gateways) to design and implement a workforce grant program.³ Launched in 2025 as part of Smart Start Illinois—the state’s multi-year plan to increase access to and funding for early childhood services—the Smart Start Workforce Grants award funds to eligible ECE programs to raise staff wages and classroom quality without raising costs for families.⁴ Grant funds are awarded prospectively each quarter, contingent on grantees setting and maintaining a competitive wage floor for staff in their Grant-funded classrooms.⁵

The design of the Smart Start Workforce Grants would not have been possible without Gateways data. From the outset, the Grants have aimed to raise average wages for grantee staff by \$2 to 3 dollars, a policy goal informed by market research as well as

as historical wage information drawn from Gateways, which is housed at the Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (INCCRRA).⁶ Towards that goal, the program is built on an underlying cost model that uses various Gateways-provided inputs like numbers of eligible ECE programs and associated classrooms and staff as well as staff wages to estimate the overall investment, in dollars, needed to reach wage floors that reflect the \$2-3 increase.⁷ The cost model estimates carry many assumptions and thus are only as good as the quality of the data that helped create them. In Illinois as in many other states, the high-quality data necessary for accurate, trusted estimates is only available from workforce registries.

³ “Illinois Gateways to Opportunity Professional Development System”, Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies, accessed November 9, 2025, <https://registry.ilgateways.com/>.

⁴ “Smart Start Workforce Grants”, Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies, accessed November 9, 2025, <https://www.ilgateways.com/smart-start/smart-start-workforce-grants>.

⁵ “Smart Start Workforce Grants”, 2025.

⁶ Joellyn Whitehead, (virtual interview regarding the Gateways to Opportunity Registry, conducted November 6, 2025).

⁷ Whitehead, 2025.

Gateways data also enables implementation of the Grants. A program’s eligibility for Grant funds is based on various criteria including its licensing status, its dates and hours of operation, and the proportion/amount [differing for centers and homes] of its licensed capacity being funded by Illinois’ Child Care Assistance Program.⁸ Well-established and closely connected with child care licensing and other state systems, Gateways is an ideal data source that state agency staff use to verify eligibility criteria for program applicants. Further, building from its broader capacities verifying workforce qualifications and professional development, Gateways facilitates processing quarterly payroll and wage documentation that program grantees must submit to prove they met the appropriate wage floor for staff in Grant-funded classrooms.⁹

Grant funds are making an impact on ECE programs and staff across Illinois. Per the cost model, the state is allocating a total of \$48M in Grant funds to nearly 4K eligible programs each quarter.¹⁰ These programs use the funds to raise wages for around 20K individual staff—primarily, teachers and assistant teachers in child care centers, and leads in family child care homes, with additional staff roles eligible—serving in nearly 9K funded classrooms.¹¹ All told, Grant funds are helping raise classroom quality for an estimated 107K Illinois children.¹²

Now in FY26 and the second year of Grants implementation, state and INCCRRA staff intend to use Gateways data to explore policy questions around the propriety of current Grant eligibility criteria, the competitiveness of the current Grant wage floors [relative to similarly paying industries], the impacts of Grant funds on staff retention and persistent capacity shortages, and any apparent differences in workforce patterns between grantee and non-grantee programs.¹³ Answers to these and other questions will be critical in informing Grant planning and refinement moving ahead—and demonstrating the continued value of workforce registry data for decisionmaking.

Learn more about Gateways through its NWRA member profile¹⁴.

⁸ “Smart Start Workforce Grants”, 2025.

⁹ “Smart Start Workforce Grants”, 2025.

¹⁰ Whitehead, 2025.

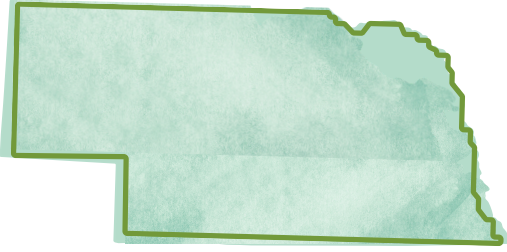
¹¹ Whitehead, 2025.

¹² Whitehead, 2025.

¹³ Whitehead, 2025.

¹⁴ “Illinois - Gateways to Opportunity”, National Workforce Registry Alliance, accessed November 9, 2025, https://www.registryalliance.org/member_profile/gateways-to-opportunity/.

Streamlining ECE professional pathways in Nebraska



The Nebraska Early Childhood Professional Record System (NECPRS) is helping the state build better professional pathways for the ECE workforce.¹⁵ Workforce registries like NECPRS collect and share resources supporting ECE professionals, including information describing various academic or non-degree ECE credentials, where and how those credentials can be earned, and how they can spur

and signal career growth. One notable credential is the Child Development Associate credential (CDA), which is an industry standard and widely recognized across the country.¹⁶ As part of its prioritization of ECE professional development, the state of Nebraska has developed and maintains several pathways that ECE professionals can take to earn a CDA.

The Nebraska CDA Roundtable facilitates CDA pathways in Nebraska, and its work stands on data from NECPRS and other sources. Established in recent years alongside the current iteration of NECPRS, the Roundtable convenes state agency staff, researchers, policymakers, trainers, and other CDA-interested partners to build a stronger, more streamlined CDA credentialing system that better serves ECE professionals.¹⁷ Fragmentation—of funding, governance, data infrastructure, etc.—is a reality in the ECE field, making breaking down silos necessary for effecting systems-level change. **Without ready access to NECPRS and its data, the Roundtable would not be able to function in the same coordinated way across partners, and reciprocally, the development of NECPRS and its integration with other state systems have been informed by gaps and needs identified through Roundtable discussions.**¹⁸

CDA Roundtable members actively use data to set goals, plan, communicate value, and support ECE professionals. The Roundtable meets quarterly to track progress towards data-informed goals—as measured through NECPRS-enabled outputs like numbers of CDA credentials earned, CDA credential holders, or CDA trainings held—and to plan for necessary changes to relevant state policies or systems.¹⁹ Data also helps the Roundtable tell compelling stories about its work and the value of the CDA credential. These stories employ data snippets tailored to different stakeholder audiences, and they are a key tool, among others, that the state’s CDA Navigator staff uses to share resources and information with ECE professionals.²⁰

¹⁵ “Nebraska Early Childhood Professional Record System”, Nebraska Department of Education, accessed November 11, 2025, <https://necprs.ne.gov/home>.

¹⁶ “Educator Pathways”, Council for Professional Recognition, accessed November 11, 2025, <https://www.cdacouncil.org/en/educator-pathways/>.

¹⁷ Jené Chapman (virtual interview regarding the Nebraska Early Childhood Professional Record System, conducted October 30, 2025).

¹⁸ Chapman, 2025.

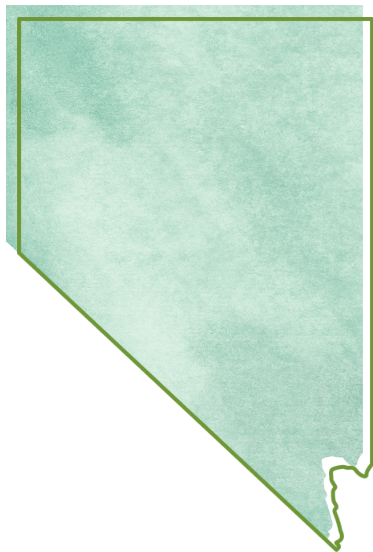
¹⁹ Chapman, 2025.

²⁰ Chapman, 2025.

As the work of the CDA Roundtable moves forward, NECPRS staff are exploring ways to enhance the registry and its data to keep pace. Notably, despite what it has meant to the Roundtable and other coordinated ECE efforts, NECPRS as a single consolidated system—a one-stop shop for CDA-related and other ECE workforce data—remains a work in progress. The reality in Nebraska and other states remains one of numerous, disparate data sources often maintained by multiple state entities. Workforce registries are an ideal home for integrated ECE workforce data, and an immediate priority for NECPRS is incorporating data from additional sources to create more comprehensive information for pathways design and implementation.²¹

Learn more about NECPRS through its NWRA member profile.²²

Serving as a gateway to ECE workforce initiatives in Nevada



The Nevada Registry (The Registry) has a longstanding record of adapting its services to support Nevada’s Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) workforce.²³ Since The Registry’s launch in 2004, Registry staff have prioritized building resources and underlying data infrastructure that meet ECEC educators when and where they are.²⁴ Their focus on flexibility and responsiveness has paid dividends as workforce needs have evolved over the decades, with Registry functionality growing and shifting to match. Notably, The Registry informed state leaders through and beyond the COVID-19 pandemic by providing data to guide the roll-out of two federally funded initiatives and enabling rapid engagement of educators statewide to access those programs.²⁵ In turn, these successes have grown further buy-in and trust in The Registry as an integral source for resources and data that support the ECEC workforce and inform broader ECEC decisionmaking, particularly during times of change.

In Nevada, being flexible and responsive starts with the custom-built workforce management system underlying The Registry. States ultimately can choose how they implement a workforce registry’s technical architecture, whether building in house, using a vendor-built product, or some combination. Nevada’s in-house database development has allowed for complete customization in response to new quality initiatives, mandates, membership growth and

²¹ Chapman, 2025.

²² “Nebraska Early Childhood Professional Records System”, National Workforce Registry Alliance, accessed November 11, 2025, https://www.registryalliance.org/member_profile/nebraska-early-childhood-professional-records-system/.

²³ “The Nevada Registry, The Path to Brighter Futures”, The Nevada Registry, accessed November 18, 2025, <https://www.nevadaregistry.org/>.

²⁴ Shelly Nye (virtual interview regarding The Nevada Registry, conducted November 18, 2025).

²⁵ Nye, 2025.

and economic/funding/political climate changes (as resources are available).²⁶ Nevada’s solution may not be the best approach for every state, but it—coupled with mandatory Registry participation for educators working in licensed child care settings—has resulted in a high-quality data set representative of the ECEC workforce in Nevada.

Across states, workforce registries serve as tools for reaching broad swaths of the diverse ECEC field regardless of role, setting, and location, and Nevada’s rapid provision of pandemic-related ECEC workforce supports would not have been possible without The Registry and its data. During the pandemic, **The Registry’s ability to create a single point of access within the Online Portal and to verify eligibility were critical in delivering \$18M (across three funding cycles) in federally funded stipends to over 8K active members of the Registry working in ECEC settings statewide.**²⁷ With that effort as a proof of concept, the state selected The Nevada Registry to help host a second federally funded initiative providing free telemedicine and teletherapy benefits to the ECEC workforce in Nevada for a two-year period.²⁸ **This telehealth program ultimately saved participants an estimated \$1.3M in health care costs** while offering Registry staff lessons learned around promoting Registry benefits to increase utilization.

Looking ahead, Registry staff are planning for development of new Registry functions and resources and enhancements to existing functions to further meet the needs of a changing workforce. The Registry’s Career Ladder will also be revised to incorporate incremental and stackable professional pathways for educators.²⁹ More immediately, two Preschool-Development-Grant-funded resources, both supported by Registry infrastructure, will be rolled out in the next few months: a public-facing reporting interface and data dashboard designed to allow visitors to The Registry to generate real-time reports on pre-determined data points related to ECEC workforce data; and a wellness guidebook focused on promoting educator well-being.³⁰ Through these and other Registry developments, staff continue to build a system that is responsive to current workforce needs and is well-equipped to meet future needs in flexible ways.

Learn more about The Registry through its NWRA member profile.³¹

²⁶ Nye, 2025.

²⁷ Nye, 2025.

²⁸ Nye, 2025.

²⁹ Nye, 2025.

³⁰ Nye, 2025.

³¹ “Nevada Registry”, National Workforce Registry Alliance, accessed November 18, 2025, https://www.registryalliance.org/member_profile/the-nevada-registry/.

Increasing access to ECE professional development opportunities in New York



The Aspire Registry (Aspire) is helping New York grow and promote professional development (PD) opportunities for the state’s ECE workforce.³² Housed at the City University of New York’s New York Early Childhood Professional Development Institute as part of the state’s New York Works for Children PD system, Aspire is the trusted source for information that describes and supports the workforce, including on professional trainings available to early childhood educators. Among other functions, the registry connects educators with approved trainings, virtual and in-person, and supports the work of New York’s training providers—all towards making high-quality PD more accessible in communities across the state.³³

As the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic prompted shifts to virtual modes of working and learning, the ECE field and its PD systems had to adapt, and Aspire proved vital for informing changes in New York. Notably, as state and local entities quickly approved and launched novel virtual trainings, the registry empowered partners like the New York Early Care and Learning Council (ECLC) with real-time data on virtual synchronous training attendance to understand saturation and meet emerging demand.³⁴ Thousands of early childhood educators attended over 900 synchronous trainings during the first year of the pandemic, through March 2021, with all attendance verified through and linked to attendees’ Aspire member profiles.^[2] Since, this verification and the technology that enables it have continued to streamline training attendance tracking and other PD processes, like training approval.

Aspire’s PD Finder connects the ECE workforce with high-quality virtual and in-person PD opportunities. A resource within the broader registry system, PD Finder serves as a single platform where Aspire staff can accept submissions for prospective trainings, review and approve select trainings, confirm training quality per review criteria, and advertise approved trainings.^[3] In recent years, Aspire staff have reviewed more than 2K submitted training courses and nearly 6K training events annually, with year-over-year increases in each category—numbers that would not have been possible through the analog

³² “The Aspire Registry”, New York Works for Children, accessed November 17, 2025, <https://nyworksforchildren.org/the-aspire-registry/learn-more/>.

³³ Olivia Lasala (virtual interview regarding the Aspire Registry, conducted November 17, 2025).

³⁴ “The Aspire Registry, Data Stories, Edition III”, New York Works for Children, October 2021, accessed November 17, 2025, https://mcusercontent.com/60dcd605a44cbebd03a13275/files/ec015d93-8672-446e-27e0-9e96e5525c8b/The_Aspire_Registry_Data_Stories_October_2021.pdf.

³⁵ “The Aspire Registry, Data Stories, Edition III”, 2021.

³⁶ “The Aspire Registry, Data Stories, Edition V”, New York Works for Children, Spring 2023, accessed November 17, 2025, https://nyworksforchildren.org/media/1206/print_the-aspire-registry-data-stories_spring2023pdf.pdf.

pen-and-paper process that was a reality pre-registry.³⁷ Upon approval, staff make training and training provider information available on the platform for search by registry members.

Recognizing that training providers (trainers) make ECE PD systems go, Aspire welcomes them as registry members. Aspire data on trainer demography, expertise, qualifications, and location is one of few sources for information on this population statewide. Upon joining Aspire, trainers are categorized based on their qualifications, and these categories—ranging from registered members to specialists in specific content areas—serve as markers of expertise.³⁸ As of summer 2024, more than 2K trainers had an active registry profile, with distribution across New York and the New York City tri-state area.³⁹ This representation, easily disaggregated by various trainer characteristics, gives Aspire staff and other ECE decisionmakers a comprehensive view of PD-supporting capacity at the state level as well as in specific communities.

Aspire staff and their registry counterparts in other states play an integral role in promoting ECE PD opportunities. While technology and data tools like Aspire’s PD Finder are important for creating and sharing information, staff actively partner with diverse stakeholders who can make best use of that information. **Partnerships are necessary in the fragmented ECE field,** and in New York, using Aspire data, they have bridged state agencies, other state-level entities like the ECLC, public universities, ECE workforce membership organizations, advocates, and others.⁴⁰ Aspire staff emphasize **these connections are critical for ensuring registry data informs policy and implementation decisions—and ultimately, helps increase early childhood educators’ access to high-quality PD.**⁴¹

Learn more about Aspire through its NWRA member profile.⁴²

³⁷ “The Aspire Registry, Data Stories, Edition V”, 2023.

³⁸ “The Aspire Registry, Data Stories, Edition VII”, New York Works for Children, Summer 2024, accessed November 17, 2025, https://nyworksforchildren.org/media/1243/data-story_summer-2024.pdf.

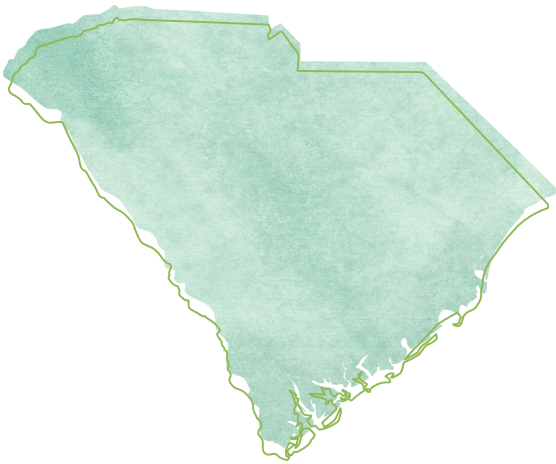
³⁹ “The Aspire Registry, Data Stories, Edition VII”, 2024.

⁴⁰ Lasala, 2025.

⁴¹ Lasala, 2025.

⁴² “New York - The Aspire Registry”, National Workforce Registry Alliance, accessed November 17, 2025, https://www.registryalliance.org/member_profile/the-aspire-registry/.

Growing understanding of ECE workforce compensation in South Carolina



SC Endeavors Registry (Endeavors) wage and salary data helps leaders in South Carolina better understand ECE workforce compensation patterns across the state.⁴³

In recent years, this data has informed a series of federally-funded, temporary initiatives—including a Preschool Development Grant (PDG) needs assessment and related wage supplement program and the more recent SC BOO\$T pilot funded by the American Rescue Plan Act—intended to boost wages and minimize typically high turnover rates among the ECE workforce.⁴⁴ These efforts recognize the crucial role ECE educators play in pursuing the state’s broader goal of promoting affordable,

high-quality child care options that support working families and the economy.⁴⁵

Workforce registries serve as backbone data systems, among other things, that help create better information for systems-level decisionmaking, but they require sustained attention and investment to fill that role. In South Carolina, the predecessor to Endeavors suffered from relatively incomplete, poor-quality data, including limited information on wages, salaries, and benefits. Ongoing challenges supporting the workforce prompted the state to invest in more modern data infrastructure and, after delays in implementation related to the COVID-19 pandemic, ultimately resulted in the current version of Endeavors, which is housed in the South Carolina Department of Social Services’ SC Endeavors division.⁴⁶ Though wage information in Endeavors is self-reported by ECE educators, Endeavors staff have validated its general accuracy against national-level datasets, and data coverage is high thanks to concerted registry marketing efforts.⁴⁷

South Carolina’s 2023 PDG needs assessment used Endeavors data to confirm, for the first time, what the state’s ECE community had long known through anecdote and experience: compensation varies across the state and is widely stratified by program type and educator characteristics.⁴⁸ For myriad reasons, compensation in the ECE field lags behind other industries—and K–12 education—requiring similar levels of training. But the needs assessment findings specified where wages and salaries actually stood, setting the stage for a temporary, follow-up wage supplement program. That program and the broader needs assessment hinged on Endeavors data, which continues to provide justification for further investments in the registry and broader ECE workforce.⁴⁹

⁴³ “Welcome to the SC Endeavors Registry”, SC Endeavors, South Carolina Department of Social Services Division of Early Care and Education, accessed November 10, 2025, <https://registry.scendeavors.org/v7/trainings/search>.

⁴⁴ Melissa Starker (virtual interview regarding the SC Endeavors Registry, conducted October 28, 2025).

⁴⁵ Starker, 2025.

⁴⁶ Starker, 2025.

⁴⁷ Starker, 2025.

⁴⁸ Starker, 2025.

⁴⁹ Starker, 2025.

One such investment was **SC BOO\$T**, a pilot wage supplement program built on Endeavors data. Administered in 2024 across two semi-annual funding rounds, SC BOO\$T provided one-time supplements—just over \$25M statewide—directly to ECE educators based on their respective levels on the state’s career ladder.⁵⁰ The information necessary to implement the program, including educator wages and career levels, all came from Endeavors, as did contextual information necessary for evaluation, like participating educators’ program types, settings, and positions. Ultimately, **more than 10K ECE educators, representing every county in the state, received a supplement, and preliminary analysis by Endeavors staff found an 8% year-over-year turnover rate among participants, or roughly half the estimated 15-to-25% rate among ECE educators nationally.**^{51,51,53}

Moving forward, Endeavors staff intend to continue exploring differences in ECE workforce compensation by educator characteristics like education and role. Analyses to date suggest a positive relationship between qualifications and compensation, and staff hope to use this and other evidence to make the case for a statewide, career-ladder-tied salary scale and potentially, future wage supplements akin to SCBOO\$T.⁵⁴ These potential policy changes and interventions would better reflect the ECE educators’ vital contributions to South Carolina, and they would not be possible without data from workforce registries like Endeavors.

Learn more about Endeavors through its NWRA member profile.⁵⁵

⁵⁰ “The Impact of SC BOO\$T” (infographic shared by Melissa Starker), SC Endeavors, South Carolina Department of Social Services Division of Early Care and Education, 2025.

⁵¹ “The Impact of SC BOO\$T”, 2025.

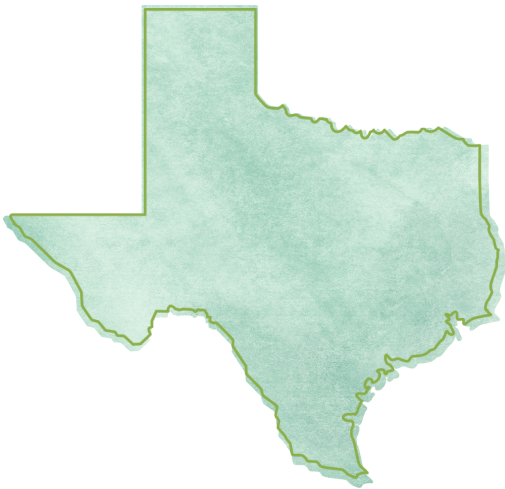
⁵² R. Grunewald, R. Nunn, and V. Palmer, “Examining Teacher Turnover in Early Care and Education”, Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis, 2022, <https://www.minneapolisfed.org/article/2022/examining-teacher-turnover-in-early-care-and-education>.

⁵³ S. Amadon, Y-C. Lin, and C. Padilla, “Turnover in the Center-Based Child Care and Early Education Workforce: Findings from the 2019 National Survey of Early Care and Education”, 2023, OPRE Report #2023-061, Washington, DC: Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

⁵⁴ Starker, 2025.

⁵⁵ “South Carolina - Endeavors Registry”, National Workforce Registry Alliance, accessed November 10, 2025, https://www.registryalliance.org/member_profile/center-for-child-care-career-development/.

Building data tools to inform and support the ECE workforce in Texas



The Texas Early Childhood Professional Development System (TECPDS) prioritizes making its registry data useful for ECE professionals and others in Texas.⁵⁶

Housed at the Children’s Learning Institute at UTHealth Houston and fully integrated with the Texas Quality Rating Improvement System and other state systems, TECPDS registry is in the midst of an ongoing, phased effort that has enhanced its internal data infrastructure; is building online data resources aimed at ECE audiences; and will continue to launch those resources over the next couple of years.⁵⁷ In sum, the suite of TECPDS data tools exemplifies the system’s broader goals of building

resources for individuals and getting better information in the hands of decisionmakers.⁵⁸

The TECPDS Career Hub supports career advancement for ECE professionals. The Hub went public in 2024 and combines various functions—all built on TECPDS data—tailored to various professional roles like classroom teachers, care providers, trainers, and planners. These tools help users—over 40K educators or administrators were active users during the last six months—understand their diverse career options and pathways forward throughout ECE, and they facilitate professional development for experienced ECE professionals and newcomers alike.⁵⁹ Spurred by positive early reactions from the field, TECPDS staff and contracted vendors are continuing to enhance the Hub, including through thoughtful exploration and prospective implementation of artificial intelligence applications like chatbots that can help provide more individualized supports to users.⁶⁰

A professional networking platform within TECPDS, TECPDS Connect encourages connections between ECE professionals by geography, role, or other affinities. Connect serves as “LinkedIn” for Texas’ ECE workforce, acting as a digital resume where users can share their qualifications and experience. The platform also enables users to convene groups for meeting and engaging peers as well as track recent and upcoming professional development or community events.⁶¹ In addition, it has provided a novel data source for TECPDS staff to use to tailor programming and supports to current workforce needs. As with the Career Hub, early returns on Connect have been positive—roughly 4.5K users have joined the platform since its launch in July 2025, largely through word-of-mouth—and continued enhancements to the platform are planned for the near future.⁶²

⁵⁶ “Texas Early Childhood Professional Development System”, Children’s Learning Institute, University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston, accessed November 11, 2025, <https://public.tecpds.org/>.

⁵⁷ Tracy Anne Jones (Virtual interview regarding the Texas Early Childhood Professional Development System, conducted October 28, 2025).

⁵⁸ Jones, Interview, 2025.

⁵⁹ Tracy Anne Jones (Email correspondence regarding usage of the Texas Early Childhood Professional Development System, received November 11, 2025).

^{60,61} Jones, Interview, 2025.

⁶² Jones, Correspondence, 2025.

Beyond supporting individual ECE professionals, TECPDS and its data help create systems-level views of the ECE workforce to inform local and state policymaking. Notably, the annual State of the Workforce Reports provide data snapshots on various characteristics of the field; last year's iteration focused on education and experience.⁶³ Another resource, the ongoing TECPDS Career Pathways Study, will be the first report to use TECPDS data to help answer policy questions around workforce retention and churn, and TECPDS staff expect Study findings will inform ongoing enhancements to the Career Hub and other registry data tools.⁶⁴ These resources have combined with other TECPDS data to **grow community-level understanding among 28 local workforce boards and several Early Matters communities; inform internal planning and federal reporting by the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC); and facilitate the work of Child Care Licensing and other state systems.**⁶⁵

Sustained investments in TECPDS are paying dividends through accessible data tools and more useful information for decision making. It is the leading source for ECE workforce data in Texas, delivering value to its primary funder, TWC, and to ECE professionals and others across the state.⁶⁶ TECPDS staff are excited to continue improving the registry's data tools and broader infrastructure to meet decisionmakers' evolving needs, and their work demonstrates what is possible when workforce registry data are made available and put to use.

Learn more about TECPDS through its NWRA member profile.⁶⁷

⁶³ Jones, Interview, 2025.

⁶⁴ Jones, Interview, 2025.

⁶⁵ Jones, Interview, 2025.

⁶⁶ Jones, Interview, 2025.

⁶⁷ "Texas Early Childhood Professional Development System", National Workforce Registry Alliance, accessed November 11, 2025, https://www.registryalliance.org/member_profile/texas-early-childhood-professional-development-system/.

On the costs to establish and maintain a workforce registry

The costs—in dollars, human capacity, and other resources—to establish and maintain a workforce registry vary widely across states. Specific costs depend on implementation decisions related to registry functionality, technical architecture & ongoing development, institutional home, and staffing model, among others. These specificities and the practice of braiding funding, which is common across ECE systems, make obtaining concrete costs difficult.

Estimating accurate returns on investments in registries across states could be a worthwhile pursuit and under future consideration for leaders in Maryland. However, gathering sufficient cost information and allowing for sufficient time to estimate benefits, in dollars, proved too resource-intensive for this brief and its relatively short timeline. In lieu of such an analysis, the focus here is on sharing more qualitative benefits that registries have provided to the selected group of states, told through stories of a specific benefit in each state. Where available, quantitative data helps flesh out the stories.

Spring 2025 qualitative research that informed MMF’s Call-To-Action suggests that, across eight then-sampled states [distinct from but overlapping with the six states highlighted in this brief], average start-up costs to establish a registry averaged between \$300K and \$500K but ranged from less than \$100K to nearly \$1.5M.^{68,69} Further, for that sample of eight states, annual maintenance costs ranged from less than \$100K to nearly \$4M, with the wide range largely relating to specific implementation decisions regarding technical architecture & development and internal staffing.⁷⁰

Additional information on the estimated costs to establish a workforce registry in Maryland will be available in a forthcoming MMF implementation report.

⁶⁸ “Montgomery Moving Forward Call-to-Action”, Montgomery Moving Forward, accessed December 3, 2025, <https://montgomerymovingforward.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/MMF-Call-to-Action-Early-Care-and-Education-June-2025.pdf>.

⁶⁹ C. Swanson and C. Rosemond, “Workforce Registry: An Integrated Approach to Supporting Maryland’s Early Care and Education Professionals” (internal report prepared for Montgomery Moving Forward, June 2025).

⁷⁰ Swanson and Rosemond, 2025.

Conclusion: Towards a workforce registry in Maryland

Workforce registries are delivering benefits to ECE professionals and other people in states across the country. Registries fill a unique role in the ECE ecosystem, doubling as sources of high-quality data and of information and resources tailored to the needs of the ECE workforce. The stories of registries and their value may look different in different places—whether through the design and implementation of workforce grants (Illinois), the promotion of greater accessibility to professional development opportunities (New York), or the launch of modern and dynamic workforce data tools (Texas)—but in all six states profiled here, the broader benefits of better workforce data and more data-informed decision making are clear.

During a time of change and systems-building and modernizing technology, Maryland has an opportunity to set a new standard for workforce registries. The registry field is welcoming, and as Maryland leaders explore what a statewide registry could look like in their state, leaders can learn from their peers and the decades of registry-related experiences built elsewhere. As stories of registry benefits demonstrate, registries directly support ECE professionals and help create more useful information for professionals and other ECE decisionmakers. Reaping those benefits requires intention and making both initial and sustained investments. That time for investment is now in Maryland.

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