

**WRITTEN STATEMENT OF COUNTY READINESS**

<b>RESPONDENT INFORMATION</b>	
County: Kosciusko	
Legal Name: United Way of Kosciusko County, Inc.	Mailing Address: P.O. Box 923 Warsaw, In 46581-0923
Contact Name: Patricia Coy Contact Title: Executive Director (Single point of contact for communication)	Contact Phone: 574-269-2592 ext. 104 Contact Email Address: patricia@unitedwaykosciusko.org
<b>COUNTY INFORMATION</b>	
Co-Respondents (please list): Tippecanoe Valley Schools Wawasee Community Schools Whitko Public Schools Head Start of Kosciusko County United Way of Kosciusko County Warsaw Community Schools New Beginning Preschool and Child Care, Inc. North Webster Daycare & Preschool Lakeland Learning Center	Estimate Number of Children to be Served (county-wide): 360 <i>WAT</i> (Includes 260 existing and 100 new students)  Estimated Number of Eligible Providers (county-wide): 17 12 current Paths to Quality providers and 5 providers that will become Paths to Quality certified.
<b>AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE</b>	
I HEREBY CERTIFY that, to the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this statement is correct.	
Designated Representative (Printed Name): <i>Patricia Coy</i>	Title: <i>Executive Director</i>
Signature of Designated Representative: <i>Patricia Coy</i>	Date: <i>June 24, 2014</i>
Additional Signatures (of co-respondents, if necessary): <i>Heath Coy, Executive Director, North Webster Daycare</i> <i>St. P. [unclear], Superintendent, Whitko Schools</i> <i>Craig J. Huntley, Warsaw Comm. Schools</i> <i>Lynne [unclear], Head Start</i> <i>W. Hite, Wawasee Community Schools</i> <i>Melina Pily, Executive Director, New Beginnings</i> <i>Betsy May, Executive Director, Lakeland Learning Center</i> <i>Megan Wilts, Tippecanoe Valley Schools</i>	

**I. Executive Summary for Kosciusko County:**

- A. Kosciusko County, which is known as the “land of 100 lakes”, is also known as a county with a commitment to helping others and especially children. Families with the financial means many times provide their children with a preschool education by either accessing one of the faith-based preschools in the county or by contacting the Early Childhood Alliance which provides referral to Indiana Paths to Quality preschools. There are five Paths to Quality level 3 or 4 preschools in the county. Six Head Start classrooms offer an opportunity for some children to attend preschool that is free of charge for the families who qualify by income. One more class may be offered next year. Developmental preschools exist in all 4 school corporations in Kosciusko County and one of the districts has three additional preschool classroom options. These preschools are not currently eligible for the PreK vouchers but have an interest in building capacity. The United Way of Kosciusko is a financial partner to several early childhood programs in the county, and their commitment to children being “kindergarten ready” helps preschools to be more accountable for the developmental growth and development of young children. The preschools funded by United Way track student growth prior to entering kindergarten. They also assist with funding Parents as Teachers and Kosciusko Literacy Services, which provides books to young children in Kosciusko County. The United Way of Kosciusko County will be the communication contact for this pilot and will be instrumental in the procuring of 10-50% matching funds. Thousands are raised and distributed in the county each year for the education of young children. It is believed by all collaborators that the funds for the match will be attained.
- B. The leading advocates for early childhood education in Kosciusko County believe that as many as one hundred more 4 year old children will be educated with this pilot program. We look forward to building capacity in our existing preschools and adding classrooms to accommodate additional youngsters. Families will be taught activities that will enhance their parenting skills through simple, developmentally appropriate activities which will teach their children literacy and problem-solving skills on a daily basis. Families will have more financial means to be able access an early learning opportunity for their children, near their home.
- C. Many groups have joined to support the Kosciusko County Readiness Application for the Early Learning Pilot Grant for our families of young children. All are passionate about the mission of providing a quality education to children during the critical developmental time in their young lives. Kosciusko County citizens are fortunate to have so many organizations that are excited that more young children will have appropriate learning activities, including literacy, gross and fine motor development, imaginative play, and the teaching of social skills. We are grateful to be in the possible chosen counties, and we request that Kosciusko be named as a pilot county for this grant funding and learning opportunity for our youngest citizens.

## II. Community Engagement

- A. A strong commitment exists in Kosciusko County for early childhood education. The public schools within Kosciusko County support early learning programs and are collaborators for this readiness proposal. They include Tippecanoe Valley Community Schools, Warsaw Community Schools, Wawasee Community Schools, and Whitko Community Schools. Each corporation offers resources to parents of young children. Other groups that provide county wide learning resources are Kosciusko Literacy Services, (provides books to young children on a regular basis throughout the year) and Teachers as Parents, (home-based learning team that models and teaches developmental learning activities to parents for their children). The Kosciusko County Community Foundation also supports the education of young children and has assisted with funding early childhood projects and supports individual needs of children in the county. Kosciusko County is fortunate to have several private and public foundations and organizations that donate funds toward early educational services such as REMC, The Grossnickle Family Foundation, the Dane and Mary Louise Miller Foundation, and the Dekko Foundation. The Early Childhood Alliance provides referrals to parents for quality childcare in the county as well as assists providers to become certified as Paths to Quality preschools. They have been involved in the Kosciusko advocacy group that supports this proposal. Finally, we are fortunate that the United Way of Kosciusko County is a lead agency for this pilot grant. It links with all areas of the county and financially supports early childhood programs that are results-driven for meeting the goal of children being “kindergarten ready” at age 5.
- B. Local United Way funding currently supports early childhood educational initiatives by providing \$257,739.00 in the county. Other funding includes more than \$20,000.00 from ~~private or corporate donations to preschools.~~ The total number of children, ages 3 to 5, in Kosciusko County who currently attend the early childhood programs that are eligible for this grant is estimated to be 260 students.

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Title 1 funding is used for preschool in the Warsaw Community Schools in the amount of \$40,000.00 and is used to provide additional supervision beyond the teacher and materials to the Early Learning Centers at Claypool and Leesburg.

### III. Family Engagement

- A. In Kosciusko County, families are engaged in the education and wellness of their preschool children through resources such as Healthy Families, Kosciusko Literacy Services, Parents as Teachers, and Early Head Start home-based services.
- B. Kosciusko County providers of services to young children engage their families periodic monitoring of the children's progress toward attaining individual curriculum goals and through providing workshops for parents on various topics such as budgeting and discipline. For example, Head Start parents attend meetings bi-monthly and have input into their child's program. Many preschool programs meet with parents formally at least two times yearly to discuss the individual child's progress and give suggestions for the parents to use at home. Other methods of engaging parents are through newsletters that discuss parent and child engagement ideas for home and through social media pages that also provide tips and suggestions for learning at home. All early education providers in the county that will participate in the voucher grant will be encouraged to engage with parents, and will be encouraged to provide current ideas for families to participate in free and low cost opportunities for the family to participate in educational activities and the arts. Information regarding this grant will also be shared with the ministerial association of Kosciusko County so that churches in the county will better be able to be referral sources for families with low income who need preschool education for their four year old children.
- C. Children who are between ages 3-5 are identified for preschool educational services in a variety of ways. Many preschools have open houses in the spring to welcome parents to their facilities and discuss curriculum and fee structures. Children are identified through physician referrals, and referrals from First Steps (the agency that serves children age 0 to 3). Young children are also referred for preschool when they attend functions with their parents and siblings at the local school. In addition, schools send information to parents about preschool opportunities in newsletters. The additional children who can be served by this grant will be identified in these same ways and using the Head Start waiting list for the county (which last year contained an estimated 20 students, age 4, who were not provided a place in Head Start). There will also be social media announcements about the grant and announcements on local news programs and newspapers.

#### **IV. Provider Capacity**

- A. Kosciusko County currently contains six Level 4 and two Level 3 Paths to Quality preschool classes and childcare centers. Head Start has 6 classrooms in different sections of the county and a seventh classroom in the development stage. The collaborative advocacy group that has worked together on this application estimates that 80 to 100 additional 4 year old children will be able to be in an educational program with this grant in the existing 14 programs/classrooms that are eligible under the guidelines. The Directors can foresee that additional sections of preschool classes will be added to some of the existing programs to meet the needs of the additional children identified. Advocates for this funding also anticipate that area preschools that are under the direction of the public and private schools may wish to become certified as Paths to Quality preschools, and will begin working on this certification as soon as it is announced that Kosciusko has been chosen for the pilot. In this way, more students can be educated in a quality preschool program that meets the requirements for the vouchers.
  
- B. At the present time, the group collaborating to bring this grant to Kosciusko County has discussed ways to provide the additional services through a variety of structures, including school year programs as well as intensive summer programs, prior to the kindergarten year. By providing options for parents of preschoolers, more children will be provided with a preschool program and capacity can be built within the county. If other preschools take steps toward becoming eligible for the voucher grant, they will be provided information about how to market to the parents who are eligible.

## **V. Financial Match**

- A. Kosciusko County is fortunate to have the financial stability and the number of businesses and organizations that support philanthropic endeavors in the county. Kosciusko County businesses want an educated workforce, and research on preschool has shown that children who have a quality preschool experience make more money in their lifetime, will participate in fewer criminal activities, and will attain higher levels of education and training as adults. The United Way of Kosciusko County has a goal for children to be “kindergarten ready”, a goal that will be attained more successfully with additional options for young children to be involved in quality preschool experiences. It is estimated that through the work of the United Way of Kosciusko County, businesses and foundations, such as Kosciusko County Community Foundation, Orthoworx, and the Dekko Foundation, the financial match can be attained through a campaign that will target institutions that believe in and are advocates for young children.
- B. The same group that will be targeted for the matching funds will be targeted for ongoing support of preschool education. The sustainability of this funding should be directly tied to outcomes which will be shared with all stakeholders and parents. Once the assessment of the outcomes is developed and administered, and students demonstrate successful outcomes and enter kindergarten classes ready to learn at high levels, the organizations, companies, and foundations should make it a priority to continue to support research-based early learning programs for children.

## **VI. County Readiness and Program Implementation**

Kosciusko County advocates for this early learning pilot grant want to implement in the July 1, 2015 timetable, if possible. It is believed that all necessary elements to begin, including the child find activities, the classroom capacity, and the qualified staffing can be in place. This gives more preschool programs an opportunity to being the Paths to Quality certification to further build capacity. It is our goal to have quality options in place for our parents and children. Our advocacy group wants to begin to work toward offering these additional services right way. The extra time between January and July would allow for those who will be working with parents, finding the children, and, building the capacity to serve them the additional time to do all these activities to insure the quality outcome that we want for our children. If the FSSA requests that we begin sooner, that would also be possible. We look forward to being selected as one of the five Indiana counties.