Smart Start Child Care

Ad Hoc Advisory Committee Meeting #19

December 3, 2024

GOALS

- Review participation data from Smart Start Workforce Grants

- Provide feedback on proposed updates to the wage scale for Smart Start Quality Support

- Discuss Smart Start Quality Support program eligibility scenarios

- Discuss accountability and outcomes for Smart Start Quality Support

AGENDA

- Welcome and introductions

- Smart Start Workforce Grants
  - Round 1 application analysis follow-up

- Smart Start Quality Support
  - Wage scale - proposed update
  - Eligibility scenarios
  - Accountability and outcomes

- Public comment

Public Comment Instructions

- We set aside dedicated time for public comment at the end of the meeting.

- If you would like to provide public comment, please send a private chat to Rosie Dorsey. We will take comments in the order Rosie receives the names.

Build **understanding and alignment** on strategic intent and goals

Provide **input and feedback** throughout the design process

Review and pressure-test relevant cost analyses, potential policy options, and administrative options
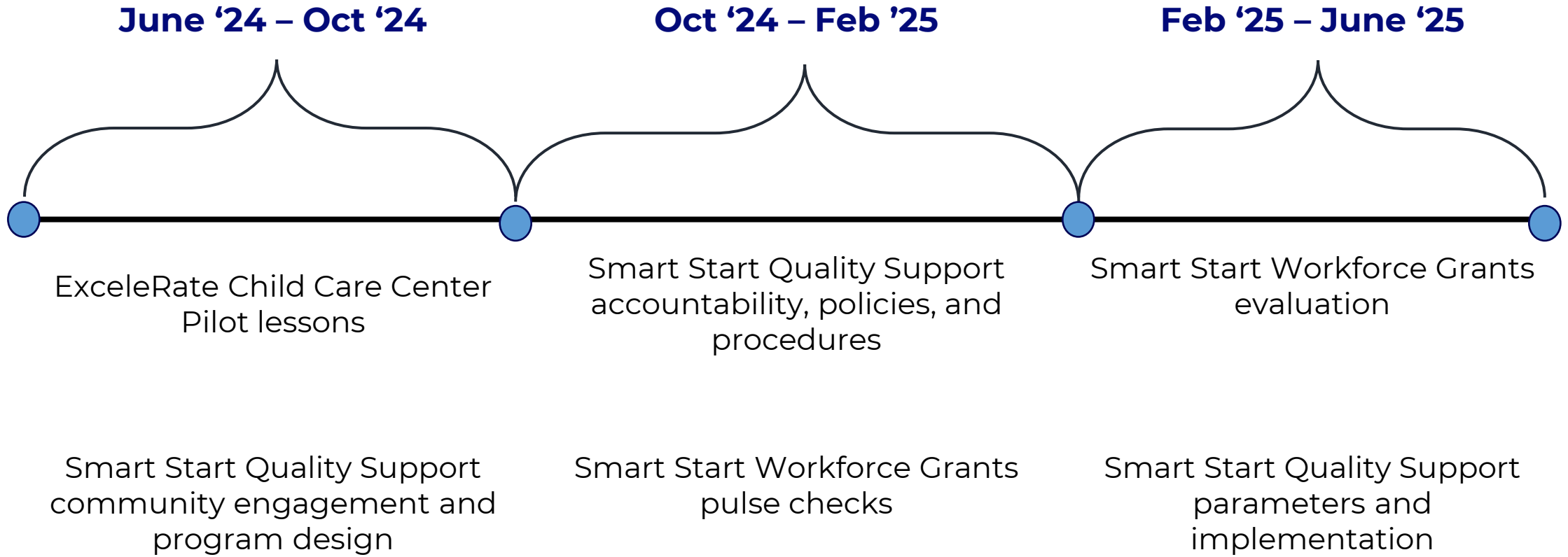
Surface any **potential risks and opportunities**

Support overall plan development and to **champion it among stakeholder groups**

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A year of planning year for Smart Start Quality Support Program expansion

June '24 – Oct '24

Oct '24 – Feb '25

Feb '25 – June '25

ExceleRate Child Care Center Pilot lessons

Smart Start Quality Support accountability, policies, and procedures

Smart Start Workforce Grants evaluation

Smart Start Quality Support community engagement and program design

Smart Start Workforce Grants pulse checks

Smart Start Quality Support parameters and implementation

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Common Themes

- Members generally had **mixed feelings** about the tradeoffs for Smart Start Quality Support eligibility, with **no clear consensus** emerging based on the poll responses.

- Members **requested additional data about potential SSQS eligibility scenarios** to identify needs based on location, setting, or populations served.

- Members **suggested exploring the feasibility** of eligibility parameters that consider **additional priority populations**.

- Members agreed that **additional engagement with FCCs is needed** to understand their unique needs and how their programs will be impacted by tradeoffs.

Questions and Concerns

- Members asked for additional data regarding Smart Start Workforce Grant interest and participation.

- Members raised potential **unintended consequences of SSQS tradeoff decisions**, such as what the impact of a potential expansion would be on current participants.

- Members are also curious about **how this program interacts with SSWG and other layered funders.**

- Members wonder if child care providers are **ready to engage** in a quality support program and what the participation rate will look like across provider types, settings, and regions.

- Members would generally like to **make decisions grounded in data and equity** to ensure populations in different regions, such as those in child care deserts, are not left out.

Over 70% of eligible family child care providers were authorized for funding in Round 1, compared to 85% of eligible center-based providers.

Program Type	Number of Licensed Programs *(full day, full year)*	Number of Eligible Programs *(2023 estimate)*	Number of Programs Authorized for Funding in Round 1	Percent of *Estimated eligible* Programs Authorized for Funding in Round 1
Centers	2,308	1,389	1,186	85%
Homes	4,563	2,881	2,051	71%
Group Homes	681	516	366	71%

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About 11% of Smart Start Workforce Grant center-based recipients are layered funders.

With an estimated 313 centers with layered funding across the state, about 40% of layered funders are receiving workforce grants.

Program type	Number of programs participating in SSWG
Layered funding	130
Non-Layered Funding	935
Unknown funding	121
Total	1186

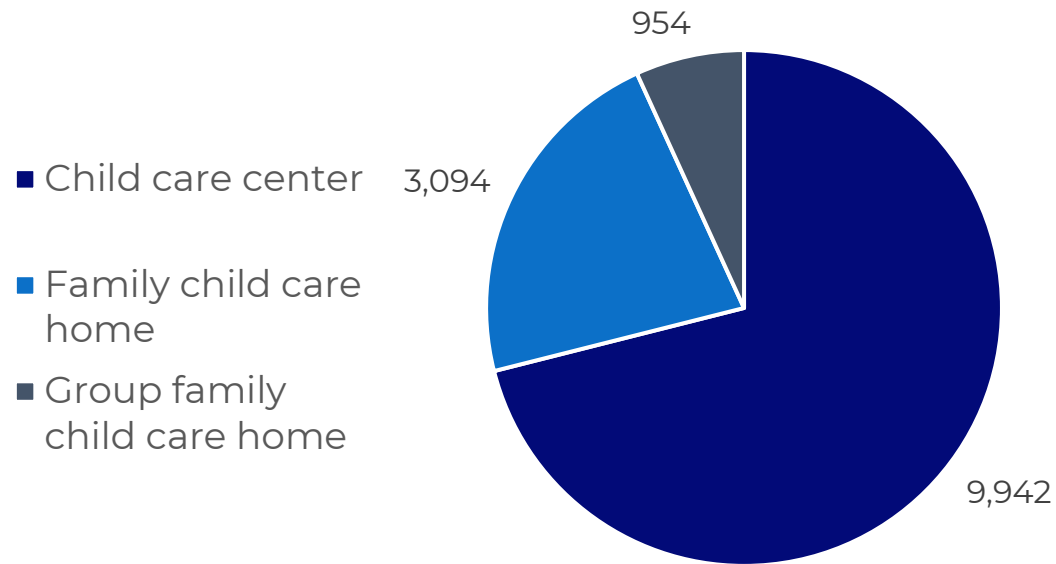Child care programs self-report funding source information to their local CCR&R at least once annually.

- **Layered Funding** includes programs that report that they received Head Start or PFA funding.
- **Non-Layered Funding** includes programs that reported not having Head Start or PFA funding.
- **Unknown Funding** includes programs are ones that have not shared a complete update (i.e. programs that are newer to the database).

With about 2,300 licensed centers (offering full-day, full-year programs), **layered funder centers represent roughly 14% of licensed centers.**
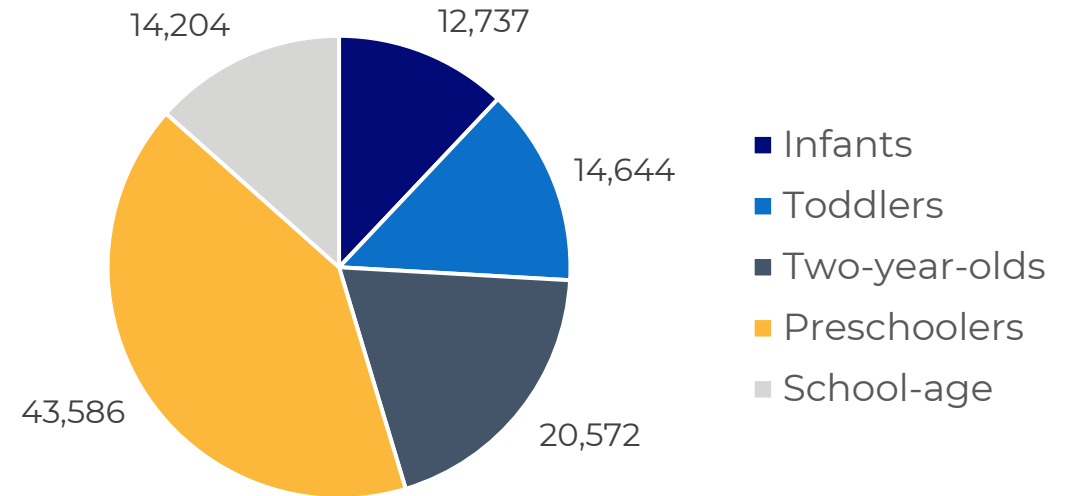
Smart Start Workforce Grants Round 1 Highlights

In the first round of funding, Smart Start Workforce Grants have reached nearly 14,000 child care professionals, impacting over 105,000 children and their families.

Nearly 14,000 professionals are now earning $17-$19/hr. or more

954

3,094

- Child care center
- Family child care home
- Group family child care home

9,942

Over 105,000 children have teachers earning $17-$19/hr. or more

14,204

12,737

14,644

- Infants
- Toddlers
- Two-year-olds
- Preschoolers
- School-age

43,586

20,572

In its first round, Smart Start Workforce Grants have reached 43% of the child care market.

Smart Start Workforce Grants Update

Questions?

The purpose of the Smart Start Quality Support Program is to create more equitable access to higher quality child care for IL children and families.

Smart Start Quality Support Program theory of change

Programs have the resources to invest in additional staff and increased wages to further support quality services

➡

- Turnover will decrease within programs
- ECEC professionals will achieve higher credentials
- ECEC professionals will engage in continuous quality improvement

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Children and families will equitably access higher quality care

Family Child Care Engagement Update

- Family child care providers should inform IDHS-DEC on designing a potential SSQS program that works for family child care and family group child care homes.

- Invitations have been extended to FCC ad hoc members for an initial conversation in December

- Additional engagement opportunities will likely follow for this group and other FCC providers/advocates

Smart Start Quality Support

Wage scale update

Engagement from providers and advocates indicated a need to update the SSQS wage scale.

Key takeaways from engagement:

- Increases between ECE levels should be **differentiated based on the effort** required to attain those credentials.

- **Specialized credentials** including the Infant and Toddler Credential (ITC), bilingual credential, and the family child care credential (FCC) **should be rewarded** as advanced qualifications.

- The **CDA credential should be included** as equivalent to at least an ECE 2.

- **Consistency between a scale for center-based staff and a scale for FCC home** providers is important.

- Lead teachers with ECE 5 or 6 **should be competitive with an entry-level K-12** teacher working 10 months/year.

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The proposed wage scale simplifies the structure and provides greater incentive to match the effort needed to reach ECE level 4 and 5.

- Reflects SSWG wage floors
  - **SSWG teacher wage floor = DCFS Qualified Lead Teacher SSQS wage**
  - **SSWG assistant teacher wage floor = DCFS Qualified TA Assistant Teacher SSQS wage**

- Larger increases for ECE 4 and ECE 5 to reflect degree attainment at those levels

- Includes additional $0.25/hr add-on for Infant/Toddler Credential and Bilingual credential at any level

	Credential Level	Group 1A	Group 1B	Group 2
Director	IDC III	$25.90	$25.15	$24.90
	IDC II	$24.90	$24.15	$23.90
	IDC I	$23.90	$23.15	$22.90
	DCFS Director Qualified	**$22.90**	**$22.15**	**$21.90**
Lead Teacher	ECE 5&6	$23.25	$22.50	$22.25
	ECE 4	$21.25	$20.50	$20.25
	ECE 3	$20.25	$19.50	$19.25
	ECE 2 or CDA	$20.00	$19.25	$19.00
	ECE 1	$19.50	$18.75	$18.50
	DCFS Qualified Teacher	**$19.25**	**$18.50**	**$18.25**
Assistant Teacher	ECE 2, SAYD 2 & 3	$18.75	$18.00	$17.75
	ECE 1 and SAYD 1	$18.25	$17.50	$17.25
	DCFS Qualified TA	**$18.00**	**$17.25**	**$17.00**

$0.25 add-on for specialized credentials*

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DRAFT FOR DISCUSSION PURPOSES ONLY

FCC providers/owners will receive a stipend based on the center-based wage scale, with an additional 10% added to account for the additional responsibilities of home providers.

- Additional funding will be provided to support assistant wages based on their credentials and hours worked.

- This stipend will cover the additional cost of payroll taxes, as well as the costs associated with CQI/substitute coverage.

- **The following target wage scale serves as the reference point for determining these stipends:**

	Credential Level	Group 1A	Group 1B	Group 2
Provider/ Owner	ECE 5&6	$25.18	$24.35	$24.08
	ECE 4	$23.18	$22.35	$22.08
	ECE 3	$22.18	$21.35	$21.08
	ECE 2 or CDA	$21.93	$21.10	$20.83
	ECE 1	$21.43	$20.60	$20.33
	DCFS Qualified Teacher	**$21.18**	**$20.35**	**$20.08**
Assistant	ECE 2, SAYD 2 & 3	$18.75	$18.00	$17.75
	ECE 1 and SAYD 1	$18.25	$17.50	$17.25
	DCFS Qualified TA	**$18.00**	**$17.25**	**$17.00**

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Smart Start Quality Support

Eligibility Scenarios

Eligibility Trade Offs: What We've Heard

- **Eligibility should be stable and predictable over time**
- **All eligible programs should be able to participate**, without an application/NOFO
  - This requires narrow eligibility criteria to keep the program within budget
- **Programs should serve infants and toddlers and other high-need populations**
  - *Note: We do not currently have a reliable way to measure the number of programs serving children with special needs and multi-lingual learners*
- **Programs should be funded to meet the core elements of the SSQS program:**
  - Wage enhancements tied to staff credentials
  - Floater/sub to relieve staff from classroom responsibilities or FCC provider from caregiving
  - Coaching support for continuous quality improvement

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Proposed SSQS Grant for a Typical Center

- **Receives advance payment for each employee to meet the wage scale,** based on their credentials
  - On average, $2-4/hour depending on role and credential
  - Model incorporates payroll taxes and retirement contribution based on wage increases
- Funding for **1 additional CQI staff for** every 5 classrooms, paid at the SSWG wage floor
- Receives **coaching and support** from NLU

Proposed SSQS Grant for a Typical Home

- Receives **quarterly stipend for provider-owner** based on their credential
  - Mirrors amount for lead teachers plus 10% to recognize admin responsibilities
- Receives **quarterly advance payment for an assistant based on their credentials,** if applicable
- Receives funding to support provider-owner **participation in CQI for 10 hours/month,** which can be used for substitute coverage
- Receives **coaching and support** *(provider TBD)*

Each of the scenarios below is estimated to result in roughly the same overall program cost and include between 50-70 newly participating centers and 75-100 homes.

Scenarios for discussion purposes only. Does not reflect any formally proposed or final eligibility criteria.

Eligibility criteria	Scenario 1	Scenario 2	Scenario 3
Geographic reach	Statewide	Groups 1B and 2*	Group 1A*
CCAP enrollment minimum	75% CCAP enrollment	45% CCAP enrollment	87% CCAP enrollment
Other	0.75 SVI** or higher	None	None
Across all scenarios: • Serves infants and toddlers • Licensed, Bronze or Silver Circle of Quality • Does not receive funding from ISBE/ECBG or HS			

*Group 1A: *Cook, DeKalb, DuPage, Kane, Kendall, Lake, and McHenry counties.*
Group 1B: *Boone, Champaign, Kankakee, Madison, McLean, Monroe, Ogle, Peoria, Rock Island, Sangamon, St. Clair, Tazewell, Whiteside, Will, Winnebago, and Woodford counties.*
Group 2: *all counties not listed in Group 1A or 1B.*

**The Social Vulnerability Index (SVI) uses demographic and socioeconomic data to determine a score between 0 and 1 for every Census tract, with 1 = highest need and 0 = lowest need.

Small group discussion (1)

1. Does the proposed wage scale support the purpose of the program?

2. How does each eligibility scenario align with our guiding principles?

3. What are the risks or unintended consequences of each eligibility scenario?

4. What additional data sources can or should be considered to identify programs serving other priority populations?

Smart Start Quality Support
Accountability and outcomes

Smart Start Quality Support – proposed accountability principles

Building on program guiding principles, Smart Start Quality Support accountability decisions should:

Proposed Accountability Principles
1. Ensure public funds are used to increase equitable access to high quality child care
2. Gather data to demonstrate the effectiveness of the program and inform adjustments and improvements to the Smart Start Quality Support Program
3. Limit the administrative burden for providers and the State
4. Utilize current infrastructure and technology to efficiently monitor more programs
5. Hold participating programs to clear performance measures and intended outcomes

The purpose of the Smart Start Quality Support Program is to create more equitable access to higher quality child care for Illinois children and families.

Smart Start Quality Support Program theory of change

Programs have the resources to invest in additional staff and increased wages to further support quality services

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- Turnover will decrease within programs
- ECEC professionals will achieve higher credentials
- ECEC professionals will engage in continuous quality improvement

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Children and families will equitably access higher quality care

Potential outcome measures for participating programs are aligned to the Smart Start Quality Support Theory of Change

SSQS Theory Change	Potential Measures
Programs have the resources to invest in additional staff and increased wages	Payroll reports
Turnover will decrease within programs	Turnover metrics in the Gateways Registry
ECEC professionals will achieve higher credentials	Updated credentials in the Gateways Registry
ECEC professionals will engage in continuous quality improvement	• ECWES--Work Environment Profile • ARPS--Administrator Role Perception Survey—Center Based • SSQS program activities including coaching, community of practice, and training
Children and families will equitably access higher quality care	Track which communities are accessing grants and consider how access aligns to Social Vulnerability Index

Small group discussion (2)

1. What is your reaction to the accountability principles – what do you like? Is anything missing?

2. What do you think about the potential measures?

3. What would you add or change?

Public Comment

Next Smart Start Child Care Ad Hoc Advisory Committee Meeting

Friday, February 7, 11 AM – 1 PM

- Meeting topic: Smart Start Workforce Grants Implementation Check-in
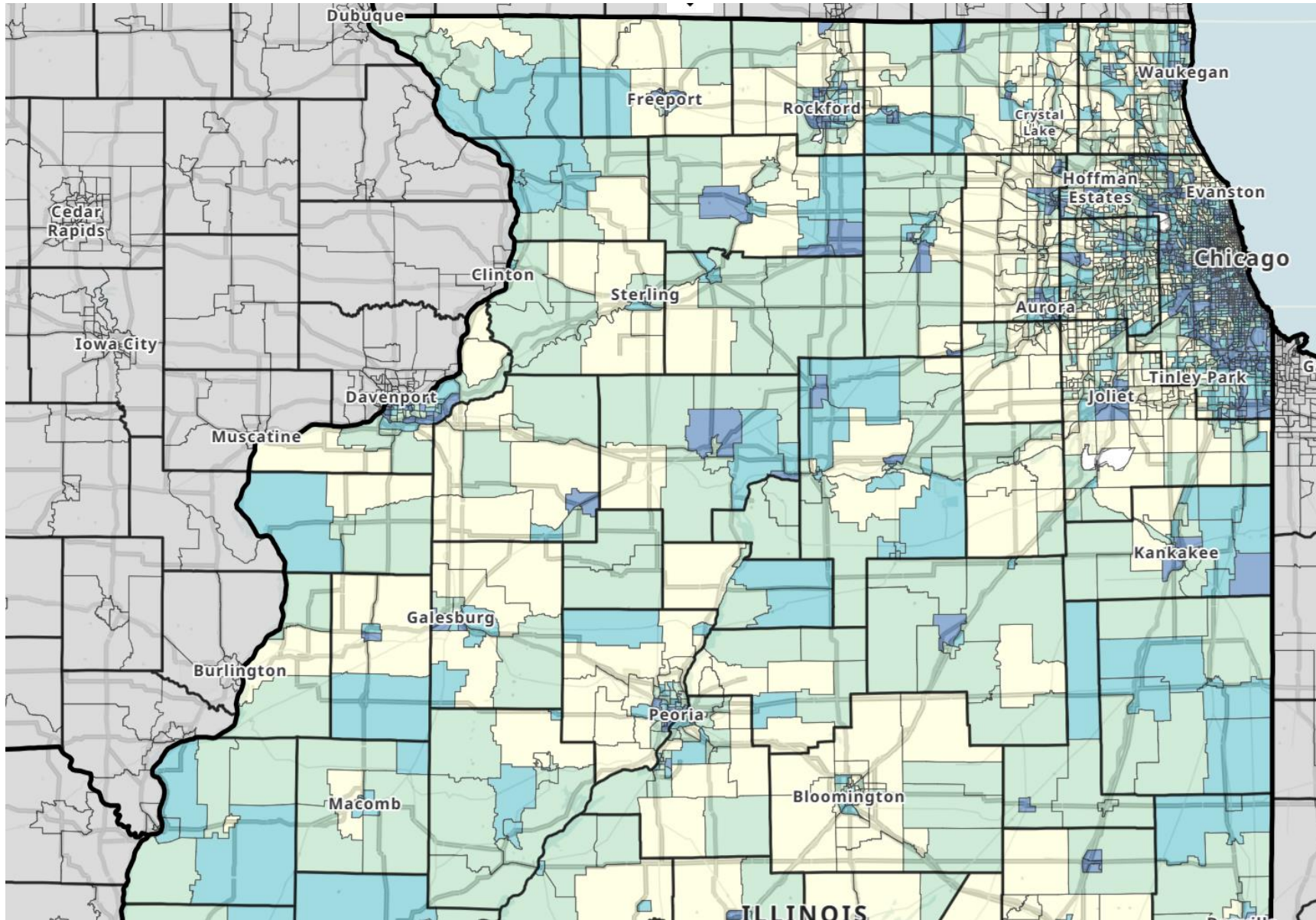
Open Survey for Feedback:

https://forms.gle/3DPPyPUcPQiTgbwX9

Thank you!

Appendix
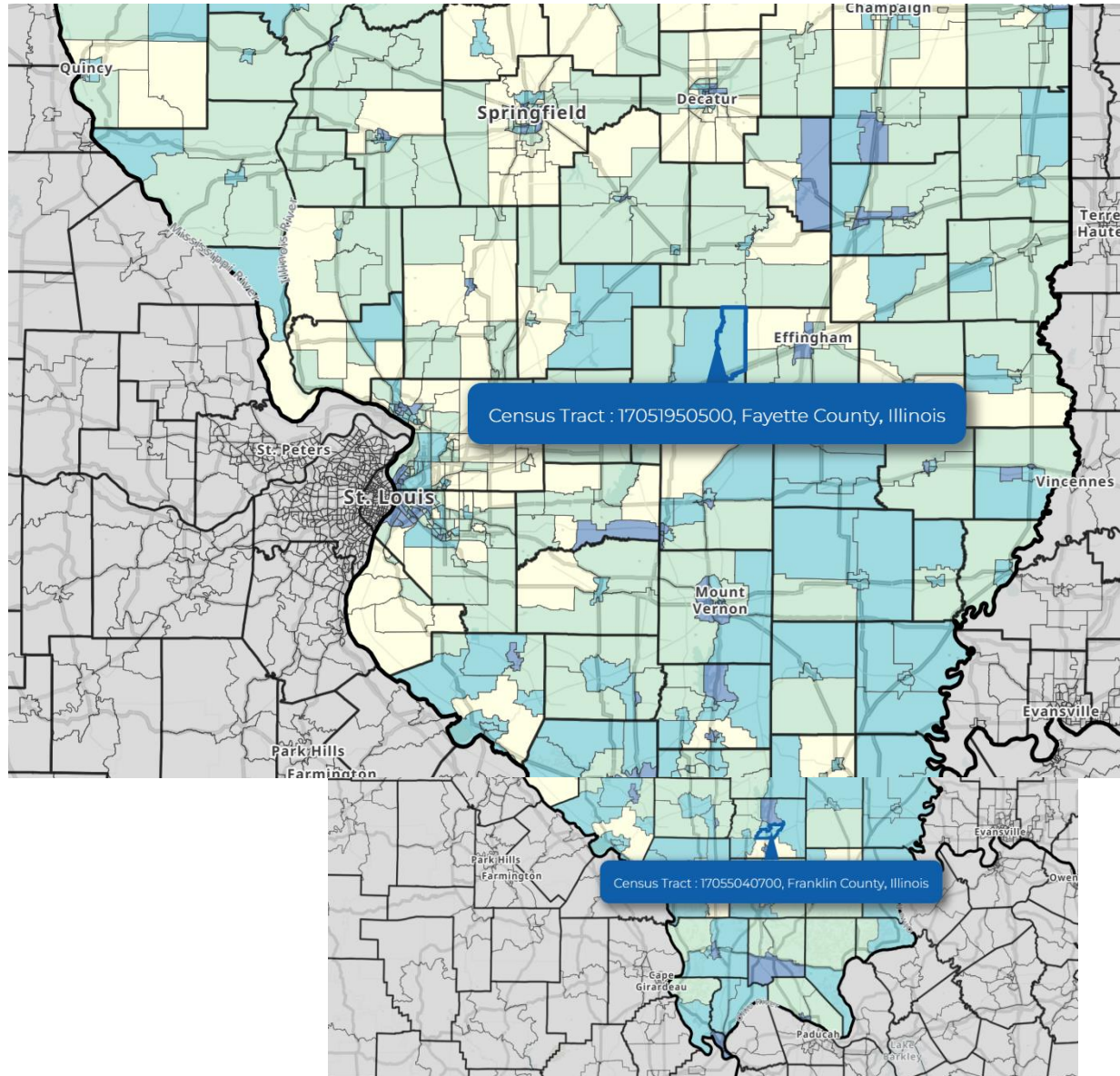
Smart Start Quality Support guiding principles will guide decision-making through all aspects of the design process.

Proposed guiding principles for Smart Start Quality Support Program
1. Decisions must be grounded in equity, prioritizing programs with limited access to funding and that are serving high concentrations of children from priority populations.
2. Decisions must be informed by those that stand to be most impacted by them, including programs that currently participate in the Smart Start Quality Support Program.
3. The program must stay within the allocated budget and meet the Governor's stated goals.
4. The program must provide participants with enough funding to cover the costs associated with requirements and implement meaningful changes in their program.
5. The program should build on and complement other statewide quality support programs and funding streams.
6. The program will build on lessons learned from the pilot program and scale up effective elements.
7. We recognize that we need to make decisions on a timeline with the best information we have.