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Media Release:

Gov. Ricketts Announces Grant to Bolster Early Childhood Services

LINCOLN – Today, Governor Pete Ricketts announced that the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) has been awarded a Preschool Development Birth through Five (PDG B-5) renewal grant. This grant is administered by the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), a part of the federal Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

“I want to thank President Trump for signing off on the allocation of more funds for this important grant,” said Gov. Ricketts. “DHHS, in partnership with Nebraska’s Department of Education, will ensure that grant funds are optimized for the benefit of Nebraska’s young children and their families. I appreciate the work our team has put into getting this grant.”

Preschool Development Birth through Five (PDG B-5) is a competitive federal grant program established as part of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) passed in 2015. Funding from this grant will allow DHHS to continue collaboration with the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) and other public and private partners to further develop existing programs that benefit children statewide.

Last year, Nebraska was awarded \$4.1 million in PDG B-5 funds. This grant allowed Nebraska to complete a comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and Strategic Plan. Supporting this important work, DHHS has been awarded a renewal grant supplied by funding signed into the PDG budget by President Trump in 2019. As a result, Nebraska will receive \$8.9 million for each of the next three years with contributing partners pledging \$2.7 million in matched funds.

The recently awarded PDG B-5 grant is designed to improve the quality of early childhood services. It will expand access to the most vulnerable families while strengthening and streamlining state-level infrastructure. The State’s efforts in the coming years will build on the accomplishments achieved during the first year of grant funding. As it moves forward, the State will also leverage the community-level leadership and infrastructure that have been built over many years to better serve preschool children and their families.

DHHS will provide overall project oversight. As a sub-grantee, the Nebraska Children and Families Foundation will serve in a project coordination role and will lead the communication and dissemination efforts. The Nebraska Department of Education Office of Early Childhood is also a sub-grantee, leading some key activities.

“Nebraska has a vested interest in ensuring families have strong early childhood educational opportunities to choose from that are supported by both public and private partners,” said Stephanie Beasley, Director of the Division of Children and Family Services. “This grant allows us to build off the successes from last year to continue improving services to families and their young children.”