



INSTITUTE FOR YOUTH,  
EDUCATION, AND FAMILIES

## Dear Municipal Leader,

Nearly four million babies are born in the US every year. Yet across the country, far too many of them don't have access to the early experiences that promote healthy growth and development. The evidence is clear: the early years of a child's life matter tremendously. The first eight years of life represent a crucial window of opportunity in which a child's environment and interactions form the foundation for future success. High-quality early learning experiences predict a child's later ability to succeed in school, graduate from high school, secure gainful employment, and avoid involvement in the criminal justice system.

Local leaders are increasingly recognizing the need to act. Leaders in city government are uniquely positioned to implement strategies that promote young children's learning, growth, and development. Investing in young children is critical to building a prepared workforce and an economically strong city. The National League of Cities (NLC) is leading a movement of local leaders who are building thriving communities through a commitment to high-quality early learning experiences. We invite you to join us.

## INVITATION TO APPLY

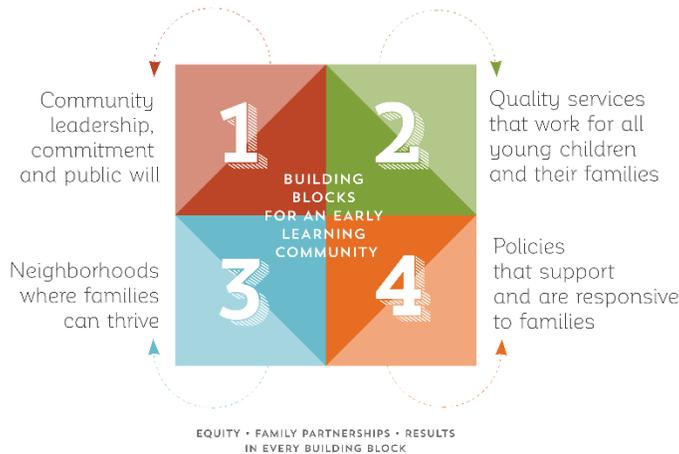
As part of the Bezos Family Foundation's vision to build an Early Learning Nation by 2025, NLC has worked with cities around the country for the last three years to develop and strengthen local early learning systems. NLC and the Bezos Family Foundation envision cities as places in which all children receive nurturing early childhood experiences, in which children and their families receive the supports they need to be healthy and thriving, in which children are considered throughout policy and practice decisions, and in which programs, services, and policies, exist and work together to ensure that every child reaches their full potential.

We invite you to apply for a new 18-month long initiative with the National League of Cities, *City Leadership for Building an Early Learning Nation*. NLC will select six new cities to participate in this initiative. The project will begin in November 2018 and end in June 2020.

## PROJECT GOALS

- Expand the number of cities nationally taking action to promote early learning;
- Increase city leaders' capacity to implement new early learning programs and policies through use of the Early Learning Communities Action Guide and with technical assistance support from NLC;
- Increase national recognition of the important role that city leaders play in championing healthy development and learning outcomes for young children;

- Deepen efforts in six cities among four key focus areas (below).



## WHAT TO EXPECT

### *Selected Cities Will Receive:*

- Access to NLC’s nearly 20 years of experience working with local leaders to expand early childhood opportunities;
- In-depth technical assistance in the form of one-on-one calls, site visits, and two in-person convenings;
- Specific and actionable strategies to move early childhood efforts forward, including strategies to deepen the involvement of local elected leaders, and knowledge of innovative best practices from around the county;
- Connections to the leading national early childhood experts;
- Recognition and visibility through NLC’s electronic publications and at NLC’s conferences.

### *Selected Cities Commit To:*

- Identify a team leader responsible for corresponding with NLC;
- Participate in bimonthly on-on-one technical assistance calls with NLC staff;
- Send three representatives to two in-person meetings, one in year one and one in year two of the project;
- Co-design with NLC staff a site visit during year one of the project to increase recognition of the importance of early learning and deepen buy-in among key city stakeholders for this project;
- Build or deepen the visible support for early learning with at least one city elected official;
- Work with NLC staff to highlight aspects of the work, including through NLC’s e-mail newsletter, the YEF Institute website, and on NLC’s social media and at NLC’s conferences.

Opportunity to Apply Released	October 15, 2018
City Applications Due	November 19, 2018
Cities Notified of Selection	November 28, 2018
Project Launch Webinar	December 11, 2018 at 2pm EST
Begin One-On-One Technical Assistance Calls	January 2019

Year 1 Leadership Academy	February 2019
Co-Design and Complete Local Site Visit with NLC	March – August 2019
Year 2 Leadership Academy	February 2020

*Timeline of Key Dates*

**WHO SHOULD APPLY**

We strongly encourage city staff who are committed to advancing an early childhood agenda in their communities to apply. While the team leader should work within in city government, we expect team leaders to work closely with diverse stakeholders across the city and develop a core team that involves community stakeholders.

**SELECTION CRITERIA**

NLC will select cities to participate in the project based on the following criteria:

- Capacity of a core team to engage consistently in the technical assistance and peer learning activities, to include the following:
  - A designated project manager
  - At least one representative from the municipal government either from a mayor’s office or relevant city department/agency
- Commitment and support from the mayor for the city to participate in this two-year technical assistance initiative;
- Demonstrated capacity and appetite to develop early learning strategies and commitment to taking action in the next two years;
- Ability to increase the geographic and size diversity of the cohort of cities currently working with NLC’s Early Childhood Success team.

**HOW TO APPLY**

To apply, complete the attached application and e-mail it to Alana Eichner, Senior Associate, Early Childhood Success at [eichner@nlc.org](mailto:eichner@nlc.org) by **7pm EST on November 19, 2018**. For any questions, contact Alana at [eichner@nlc.org](mailto:eichner@nlc.org) or 202-626-3076.