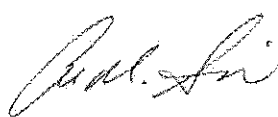
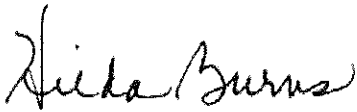


WRITTEN STATEMENT OF COUNTY READINESS

Instructions: Your written statement may not exceed **eight (8)** single spaced pages. Additional pages will not be reviewed or considered. A copy of the language of HEA 1004 may be found on the website of the Indiana General Assembly. An authorized representative for the respondent *and any co-respondents* must sign this cover page.

RESPONDENT INFORMATION	
County: Howard	
Legal Name: United Way of Howard County, Inc.	Mailing Address: 210 W. Walnut St., Kokomo, IN 46901
Contact Name: Abbie Smith Contact Title: President (Single point of contact for communication)	Contact Phone: (765) 457-6691 Contact Email Address: asmith@unitedwayhoco.org
COUNTY INFORMATION	
Co-Respondents (please list): Community Foundation of Howard Co., Inc. Hilda Burns, President 215 W. Sycamore St. Kokomo, IN 46901 (765) 454-7298 hilda@cfhoward.org	Estimated Number of Children to be Served (county-wide): 122 Estimated Number of Eligible Providers (county-wide): 11 current with four additional submitting applications to become Level 3 providers.
AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE	
I HEREBY CERTIFY that, to the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this statement is correct.	
Designated Representative (Printed Name): Abbie Smith	Title: President
Signature of Designated Representative: 	Date: June 30, 2014

Additional Signatures (of co-respondents, if necessary):



I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Howard County has an excellent network of providers of educational services starting with prenatal education through the resources to complete university master degree programs within the county. In 2013 the Community Foundation of Howard County convened leaders from our county to discuss the positive individual and economic impact of Early Childhood Education in Howard County. Attendees included District 30 State Representative Mike Karickhoff; City of Kokomo Mayor Greg Goodnight; Howard County Commissioner Paul Wyman; representatives from business; child care providers; social service agency directors; preschool educators through university officials. As evidenced by the interest and participation of these community leaders, Howard County recognizes the importance of and encourages early childhood education. Howard County is dedicated to the enrichment of early childhood and school readiness experiences for children in our community. Our county has a coalition of experts to support and implement a successful pre-k pilot program.

As stated by State Representative Mike Karickhoff, "The Early Learning Pilot Program will allow Howard County to take its current education initiatives to the next level. The addition of the Pilot Program will compliment Howard County's existing successful education programs including K-12 and Head Start." District 38 State Representative Heath VanNatter also stated, "Creating a Pilot Program in Howard County would ensure that hundreds of Hoosier children would receive the education they need at a young age that would help them be successful in their future endeavors."

Howard County has 42% of children from birth to five years of age living in poverty. A large number of four year olds in Howard County are not currently attending a quality preschool program due to the lack of funding being available. The Pilot Program would help close the gap for these children and give them an equal opportunity for kindergarten readiness, which is of critical importance for putting young children on a path that can support them through the rest of their lives. Children who are ready for kindergarten are ready to learn and succeed in school which impacts their education and their future and the economic future of Howard County and the State of Indiana.

II. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- A) Howard County has a long standing deep commitment to supporting early learning through a collaborative approach:

1. Kokomo Urban Outreach is a volunteer organization that targets families in poverty and offers support through family education, food pantries, and a free preschool for at risk children. Kokomo Urban outreach partners with 4 community, Trinity United Methodist, Child Care Solutions, and Ivy Tech Early Learning Center to offer their services.
 2. Purdue Extension offers free classes for families and child care providers around topics of healthy meals, effective utilization of food stamps, and early learning opportunities around agriculture. Purdue Extension partners with Head Start, Early Head Start, Child Care Solutions, and Healthy Families to offer these services.
 3. Ivy Tech Community College Center for Early Childhood Education is a free, play-based learning environment available for families, child care providers, and community partners to utilize. Caregivers can go with children and learn about play-based learning through hands-on activities. Caregivers can extend the learning opportunities outside of the center by taking home Totes for Tots a play-based bag of developmentally appropriate materials available for children birth to age 5 to check out and return. To implement this program all child care centers and preschools in the area are utilized as partners.
 4. Kokomo-Howard County Public Library offers ongoing reading initiatives to encourage shared reading from the earliest ages. Additionally, the library offers activities such as Story Time and Every Buddy Ready to Read to help engage children in enjoying the experience of reading by looking at literacy as a multifaceted opportunity.
 5. Bona Vista Programs Inc. is an early childhood facility that offers services to children of all ability levels and supports families birth through age 5. Bona Vista Programs offers free developmental screenings through a partnership with United Way. Bona Vista also offers monthly activities to engage early learners and their families that are open to community members with a focus around play-based learning.
 6. Rhum Academy is an instructional facility for musicians. To engage in the early learning community, Rhum Academy has partnered with Bona Vista to offer children opportunities to experience diverse music from birth.
-
- B) Kokomo School Corporation has seven elementary schools and one middle school that receive federal funding for School Wide Programs through Title I. In the 2013-2014 school year, 21% of the Title I budget, amounting to \$415,000, was taken off the top in a district wide set aside to support preschool programming for three and four year old children living in the Kokomo School Corporation attendance area. These funds support 168 students from the Kokomo School Corporation attendance area in full and half day programs. The half day program is totally funded through Title I while the full day program has a tuition fee for the extended day. This fee is \$70.00 per week. A grant from the Community Foundation of Howard County, Inc. for \$40,000 for the 2013-14 and 2014-15 school year also supports the program.

Money from the foundation is used to purchase supplies and snacks for all students as well as defraying costs for the 25 students from Howard County who live outside of the Kokomo School Corporation attendance area. Title I funds cannot be used for these students.

III. FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

- A) To create opportunities for family engagement, organizations within Howard County work collaboratively from prenatal throughout the early childhood years. Serving families prenatally through age three is the Early Head Start Program and Healthy Families Program. Through home visiting and opportunities for guided play-based child socializations, both of these programs work directly with families to support early education through a family's home environment. Head Start Program offers a targeted outreach program to engage fathers in early learning through support groups and activities geared toward father and child interactions. Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program, offered through Purdue Extension, offers parallel education for families and child care facilities on the importance of nutrition for young children. Ivy Tech's Early Learning Center offers a Tote's for Tots family education and outreach opportunity. Families can enroll in the free program and receive an educational newsletter as well as free activity bags with age appropriate toys, books, and learning materials for families to use to support early learning. Through the Child Care Resource and Referral, early learning programs can meet with these service organizations at an annual conference helping to align services and work collaboratively with families.
- B) Baby University, a program organized through Kokomo Urban Outreach, is a multi-agency program to support parent engagement in early learning. This program provides weekly parent meetings in which parents meet with volunteer mentors to share struggles and brainstorm strategies for overcoming challenges. Additionally, each week a community expert on various aspects of early learning comes to share information and resources on topics related to early education and parenting. To meet the needs of the community, multiple sessions of Baby University often run concurrently allowing for parents to attend at the location and time of day that best fits their lifestyle. Providers in the community are and will continue to be engaged in Baby University through offering their own expertise as guest speakers and through helping share the message of this valuable free program for families. The local Resource and Referral Agency, Child Care Solutions, also offers a lending library for families and child care providers. This library is full of educational toys and materials, which can be checked out to families free of charge. To better support parent and child engagement, the resource and referral partners with child care providers in the communities work to educate families on this resource and to make the materials more readily available by allowing child care programs to check materials out and share them with families.
- C) Howard County has a partnership with Child Care Resource and Referral to provide parents with information on the names of child care providers in the county that meet their identified needs. Howard County utilizes the United Way 211 program to

identify families in need and directs them toward relevant assistance. Through a collaborative effort between United Way's 211 information resource service and outreach efforts with the Child Care Resource and Referral, eligible children will be identified and families will be encouraged to enroll in the program.

IV. PROVIDER CAPACITY

- A) Howard County currently has 11 licensed or regular child care programs that are currently enrolled in Paths to QUALITY at a level 3 or 4 rating. These programs have shown commitment to "Providing better child care and brighter futures" in Howard County. Within the programs that are currently eligible under this pilot pre-k program, Howard County has 74 vacancies available to serve additional children.

Howard County is committed to an ongoing outreach to area child care programs and early childhood programs within the school system. Kokomo Center School has committed to licensing all seven of their existing preschool programs, located within four local elementary buildings, which could serve an additional 48 children bringing the total served up to 240 children. Howard County will continue to outreach and provide network support for any child care program that has interest in advancing their current Paths to QUALITY level to meet the requirements of this grant opportunity.

V. FINANCIAL MATCH

- A) United Way of Howard County, Inc. and Community Foundation of Howard County, Inc. are both serving on the steering committee of community partners for early childhood learning. Both organizations have strong local support, reputations for creating positive community impact, and fundraising success. With United Way's strong ties to corporate philanthropy and working adults and the Community Foundation's strong relationships with individuals and planned giving, the steering committee has positioned itself to be able to successfully raise matching funds for the program.
- B) Howard County has a very strong network of quality pre-k providers led by Bona Vista Childcare Solutions which consults on Paths to Quality certification and National Association for the Education of Young Children Accreditation, Bona Vista Keys for Kids Preschool, Kokomo School Corporation, Headstart, Early Headstart, and the YMCA. Each provider has its own sustainability plan at current student levels. If Howard County is selected as one of the five pilot programs in the state, there is no doubt that these well-managed providers will be able to integrate the increase in number of children served into their operating plans.

VI. COUNTY READINESS AND PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

Howard County is dedicated to the enrichment of early childhood and school readiness experiences for children in our community. Our county has created a coalition of experts to support and implement a successful pre-k pilot program. Kokomo Center School system has committed to the licensure process and enrollment into Paths to QUALITY to assist the community in the eligibility for this opportunity. The community will continue to work with Bona Vista's Child Care Solutions CCRR to recruit additional child care programs and obtain eligibility around the HEA 1004 pilot program. The local CCRR office will continue their work with the voucher intake office and community partners in Kokomo to locate and recruit eligible families for the pre-k pilot project.

**STATE OF INDIANA
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

THIRD FLOOR STATE HOUSE
INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA 46204

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1-800-382-9841
www.in.gov/H30
h30@iga.in.gov

COMMITTEES:
Ways and Means
Natural Resources

June 23, 2014

Melanie Brizzi
Family and Social Services Administration
402 W. Washington St.
W361, MS-02
Indianapolis, IN 46204

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is written in support of Howard County's Statement of County Readiness for the Early Learning Pilot Grant Program ("Pilot Program").

As a State Representative of Howard County, I believe that Howard County is fully ready to implement the Pilot Program. The Pilot Program will allow Howard County to take its current education initiatives to the next level. The addition of the Pilot Program will complement Howard County's existing successful education programs including K-12 and Head Start.

Howard County is committed to ensuring its students' academic success and I wholeheartedly support their Statement of County Readiness for the Early Learning Pilot Grant Program. The combination of Howard County's diversity, outstanding schools, and supportive community make Howard County an exceptional place for the Pilot Program.

Best personal regards,



Mike Karickhoff,
State Representative, District 30

MK: eh



STATE OF INDIANA
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
THIRD FLOOR STATE HOUSE
INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA 46204

Heath R. VanNatter
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Indianapolis, IN 46204
Toll Free: 1-800-382-9841
H38@iga.in.gov

COMMITTEES:
Utilities and Energy, VICE CHAIR
Environmental Affairs
Local Government

June 23, 2014

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing in support of the United Way of Howard County. They have submitted a grant application to the Indiana Family and Social Services Administration requesting funds to start a pre-kindergarten pilot program in Howard County.

Howard County has been identified as one of the top 18 counties in need of pre-kindergarten opportunities for school readiness. Creating a program in Howard County would ensure that hundreds of Hoosier children are receiving the education they need at a young age to help them be successful in their future endeavors.

I request your support for United Way of Howard County's application. I am hopeful that with your backing, we can help provide quality education to hundreds of Hoosier children in need. Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact my office at (317)-232-9619 or by email at H38@iga.in.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "H. R. VanNatter", written over a horizontal line.

Heath R. VanNatter
State Representative, District 38

HRV: ms