

**CITY OF BURLINGTON**  
**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT - 2019 APPLICATION**

*Application must be no more than 9 total pages (including cover page) with 12 point font.*

*Refer to NOFA for required information for each question.*

Project Name: ECHO Early Learning

Project Location / Address: 1 College Street Burlington, VT 05401

Applicant Organization / Agency: ECHO, Leahy Center for Lake Champlain

Mailing Address: 1 College Street Burlington, VT 05401

Physical Address: 1 College Street Burlington, VT 05401

Contact: Erik C. Oliver Title: Director of Development and Communications Phone #: 802-864-1848

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EIN #: 03-0347288

DUNS #: 968486571

**CDBG Funding Request: \$50,000**

**Total Estimated Program/Project Cost: \$172,790**

**Grant Duration:** mark one \_\_\_\_\_ **1 Year** \_\_\_x\_\_\_ **2 Year**

*(Only Public Service programs with a focus on Early Childhood Ed/Child Care, or Youth Services are eligible for 2 year grant this year )*

**Development:** mark one \_\_\_\_\_ **Economic Development** \_\_\_\_\_ **Construction**

**Public Service:** \_\_\_x\_\_\_ **Early Childhood Ed/Childcare** \_\_\_\_\_ **Youth Services** \_\_\_\_\_ **Health** \_\_\_\_\_ **Econ Opportunity**  
Mark one

**1. Type of Organization**

\_\_\_\_\_ Local Government

\_\_\_\_\_ For-Profit Organization

\_\_\_\_\_ Faith-Based Organization

\_\_\_x\_\_\_ Non-Profit Organization (please provide copy of your  
IRS 501(c)(3) tax exemption letter)

\_\_\_\_\_ Institution of Higher Education

**Certification**

To the best of my knowledge and belief, data in this proposal are true and correct.

I have been duly authorized to apply for this funding on behalf of this agency.

I understand that this grant funding is conditioned upon compliance with federal CDBG regulations.

I further certify that no contracts have been awarded, funds committed or construction begun on the proposed program, and that none will be prior to issuance of a Release of Funds by the Program Administrator. In addition, this project is ready to proceed as of July 1, 2019.



Signature of Authorized Official

*Erik C. Oliver*

Name of Authorized Official

*Director of Development*

Title

*1/14/19*

Date

## **I. Demonstrated Need**

### **1. What is the need/opportunity being addressed by this program/project and how does that contribute to CDBG's national objectives? \***

It is well known that the early years of a child's life are critically important and that the earlier the investment in learning and well-being, the higher the return to the child, family and society. High-quality affordable preschool programs can increase children's odds for success. When children arrive in kindergarten lacking the developmental capacity to learn, they are unlikely to catch up to their classmates without significant intervention. Ensuring that children are ready for successful school experiences is considered one of the most pressing issues in early childhood policy and practice. ECHO Early Learning (EEL) is a free, academic year long, caregiver-child enrichment program training caregivers and supporting healthy development and school readiness for early learners outside the formal care system, from diverse, low-resource, and/or New American households. Weekly serving 90+ children and 70+ caregivers, the program focuses attention on experiences that support children's physical, social-emotional, and cognitive development; play-based learning for children and caregiver together; reading-readiness; and caregiver learning and resources to foster safe, supportive, and enriching learning environments for children at home. The program aims to lower the achievement gap between low income and middle to high-income children within our community. Participation in the program will not only help prepare children for transition to formal preschool or kindergarten, it will help caregivers feel more connected to our community. Specifically, caregivers will receive information about various community resources and will have numerous opportunities to learn more about child development and ways to effectively engage with their child in a vast array of learning activities.

## **II. Program/Project Design**

### **1. Give us a short summary (2 sentences) that describe the program/project.**

A free, caregiver-child(birth-5) enrichment program training caregivers and supporting healthy development and school readiness for early learners outside the formal care system, from diverse, low-resource, and/or New American households. Weekly serving 90+ children and 70+ caregivers at ECHO and at the Janet S. Munt Family Room.

### **2. Explain why the program activities are the right strategies to use to achieve the intended outcomes. Why is the program designed the way it is? (cite evidence, best practices, or community input)\***

The EEL program curriculum is based on current best practice program design and the VT Early Learning Standards (VELS) which are aligned with the Next Generation Science Standards. Each session has the following interest stations set up for play based learning: Science, Math, Art, Literacy, Dramatic Play, Engineering (STEM), Gross Motor Development, and Fine Motor Development. The children are given time to explore and play at the stations opened throughout the space. ECHO facilitators encourage exploration through inquiry and meaning making, while also modeling positive and engaged child-adult interaction for caregivers. Small group activities are part of the daily routine along with the sharing of ideas to support community building and encouraging the growth of social emotional skills. Link to VELS:

<https://education.vermont.gov/student-support/early-education/vermont-early-learning-standards>

### **3. How will this program/project contribute to the City's anti-poverty strategy?**

EEL focuses on strengthening families by providing caregivers with opportunities for connection, education, and support. The program will contribute to the following components of the City's anti-poverty strategy:

1. Providing access to employment opportunities and/or job training, affordable child care options, educational opportunities: The program will keep children on track by supporting their physical, social-emotional, and cognitive development, and continue to build school readiness. Children will be ready to enter school and, with the connection and support provided by the program, caregivers will have increased access to community resources.

2. Decreasing social isolation and increasing social capital: Building connections among caregivers reduces isolation and increases the use of tools and resources that support early learning. A typical session covers early childhood development topics and available community resources. EEL curriculum is based on the cultural themes of our community. Caregiver talks at the morning and closing circles are focused on learning support, health and safety, and developmentally appropriate learning activities to use at home.

**4. How do you use community and/or participant input in planning the program design and activities?\***

Initially, the program started out as a National YMCA prototype with firm parameters on schedule and content. Through additional feedback from New American and underserved community partners, research with preschool educators, and national science curriculum models, ECHO has continued to make changes to the program. Curriculum includes science resource and activity area, facilitation of educational programs, and access to knowledgeable educators. Children build skills by exploring natural processes in their local environment; use tools and senses to make observations, gather and record phenomenon about the natural world; utilize play as a vehicle to build relationships to their environment, neighbors, and community; and increasingly demonstrate a sense of belonging to the community and local environment. Qualitative evaluation is continuous, through staff observations/ meetings with caregivers. A formal survey will be distributed to caregivers each year with information used to adjust the program for the following school year.

### ***III. Proposed Outcomes***

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**1. What are the intended outcomes for this project/program? How are people meant to be better off as a result of participating?**

Program outcomes are evaluated by Project Zero at the Harvard Graduate School of Early Education. This includes pre- and post-caregiver self-assessments of early learning knowledge, available in English and the home language.

Outcome 1 - School Readiness: 90+ children and 70+ caregivers will keep on track and continue to build school readiness through education materials and programs. Children will show improved pre-literacy, science literacy, motor development, and social-emotional skills.

Outcome 2 - Program Continuity for New Americans: these essential services will allow for support of caregivers and children and provide opportunity for cultural awareness within the New American community.

Outcome 3 - Caregiver Support: Building connections among caregivers reduces isolation and increases the use of tools and resources that support early learning, including pre-literacy, science literacy, motor development, and social-emotional skills. Caregivers will show an increased understanding of child development and confidence in how to support school readiness.

**2. List your goals/objectives, activities to implement and expected outcomes (# of units, # of individuals, etc.)**

Audience	Inputs	Outputs	Short-term Outcomes	Long-term Outcomes
<i>Reach</i>	<i>What we invest</i>	<i>What we do/provide</i>	<i>Results</i>	<i>Changes in the community as a result of the program</i>
Caregivers	Staff time	Academic year-long program led by an ECHO educator	Children will increase their social / cognitive skills to be successful in school.	skills necessary for transition into preschool and kindergarten
Children birth-5	Space	10 changing Early Learning Stations on a monthly basis target school readiness skills	Caregivers increase knowledge about VT's Early Childhood System and resources	Caregivers have a greater sense of connection to community, build a support system of friends and professionals and empowered to navigate the system
	Operation Costs	Intentional mentoring caregivers by ECHO instructors around current research and best practices supporting early child development	Caregivers increase their recognition of and actively participate in practices that support the healthy development	Caregivers will increase understanding of Early Childhood Development, their roles
	Materials Cost	Sharing of community resources associated with the healthy growth of children	Children increase their scientific thinking skills, scientific vocabulary and their science identity. Caregivers support STEM learning at home using vocabulary	ECHO will increase students entering Kindergarten with strong early foundation in STEM; prepared to become part of a STEM savvy citizenry.
			Caregivers increase their understanding of the value of attending the EEL program regularly and recommend the program to others.	ECHO will be viewed as an early education resource in the Greater Burlington community.

#### ***IV. Impact / Evaluation***

- 1. How do you assess whether/how program participants are better off? Describe how you assess project/program outcomes; your description should include: what type of data, the method/tool for collecting the data, from whom you collect data, and when it is collected. \***

Caregiver survey evaluating the first 3 months of the EEL program and providing an avenue for feedback on areas to address in remainder of year and an end of year evaluation that will provide feedback on the impact the program has had on development, school readiness, and level of growth for caregivers (child development knowledge, connection to community resources).

Partnerships with Burlington area preschool and kindergarten teachers will help provide insights of what best sets up a child for success in school and evaluating children that have participated in the EEL program and their level of school readiness.

- 2. How successful has the project/program been during the most recent reporting year for your CDBG project? Report the number of beneficiaries you intended to serve with which activities (as noted in your last Attachment A) and your final outcomes (as noted on your Attachment C) from June 2018 (or June 2017). For non-CDBG participants – report on your achievements from the previous year.**

This is the first year of EEL. We will have data to share in June of 2019.

#### ***V. Experience / Organizational Capacity***

- 1. What is your agency's mission, and how do the proposed activities fit with your mission?**

Given ECHO's new mission - to inspire and engage families in the joy of scientific discovery, wonder of nature, and care of Lake Champlain; and overarching goal, Strengthening families, schools, and communities across VT to support children and youth in their development. We believe science is key to our children's future and the knowledge economy, and the foundation for transforming challenges into opportunities.



**2. Explain how your agency has the capacity to carry out the proposed activity (i.e. staff qualifications, years of experience related to this type of activity, etc.)\***

Elizabeth Nuckols, ECHO's Youth Education Manager will oversee the program. She received her Master's in education from William and Mary. She has facilitated ECHO's early learning programs for 11 years. Prior to joining ECHO, Elizabeth worked as a school biology teacher and education specialist for the Virginia Aquarium. Her focal areas are teacher professional development and early science learning. She has recently worked with more than 300 professional educators around Vermont on inquiry science education strategies, providing professional development and continuing education credits which she supports through online curriculum and training. Also, acknowledging that strong relationships and trust within the New American community will drive steady increases in attendance as word of the program's effectiveness spreads, ECHO has hired longtime Y educator, Stacia Judd. Prior to ECHO, Stacia was a 22 year veteran of the Greater Burlington YMCA; in various roles with children and families, including Family Programs Coordinator, Preschool Teacher, and for the past six years as a facilitator with their Early Learning Readiness program. Joy Kubarek from PEER Associates will serve as an external evaluator. Joy has been working in informal and formal science education fields settings since 2003. She holds a Ph.D. in Science Education from the Illinois Institute of Technology. She was formerly the Shedd Aquarium's Vice President of Learning.

**3. What steps has your organization/board taken in the past year to become more culturally competent internally?**

To improve access and further break down barriers, ECHO is starting its 16th year of the *Open Door Program*: a community access program partners with 53 social service agencies to annually provide more than 33,000 free/reduced admission and 1900 complimentary memberships to the Science Museum. ECHO also maintains a Core Values team comprised of members from each department that plans trainings for all staff members on topics of cultural responsiveness and inclusivity. Additional steps include:

- Training for leadership and staff on systemic oppression (AORTA)
- All Staff training with Equity Solutions on socioeconomic and racial equity
- Leadership training on power, gender and identities
- New Manager training on diversity, inclusion, and equity
- Equity analysis and updates to hiring process to ensure more equitable hiring practices
- Diversity and equity initiatives as members of VT arts and culture leaders group.
- Installation of Mamava lactation pod for staff and guests
- Training for all staff in supporting guests and volunteers on the autism spectrum
- Training for all staff on gender pronouns; updated nametags displaying gender pronouns
- Ongoing analysis of organizational policies and practices through an equity lens

**4. Have you received Federal or State grant funds in the past three years? x Yes \_\_\_ No**

**5. Were the activities funded by these sources successfully completed? x Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ N/A**  
If No, please explain:

***VI. Proposed Low & Moderate Income Beneficiaries / Commitment to Diversity***

**1. Will the program solely serve a specific group of people? If so, check ONE below:**

- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Abused Children                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Elderly (62 years +) | <input type="checkbox"/> People with AIDS  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Battered Spouses                | <input type="checkbox"/> Homeless Persons     | <input type="checkbox"/> Illiterate Adults |
| <input type="checkbox"/> People with Severe Disabilities |   |  |

2. a. For your proposed project, please estimate how the **Burlington residents** will break out into the following income categories during the total grant period. Use the Income Table at <https://www.burlingtonvt.gov/CEDO/2018-HUD-Income-Limits>

Service / Activity	Unduplicated Total # of Burlington HH / Persons to be Served	# Extremely Low- Income (30% median)	# Very Low- Income (50% median)	# Low- Income (80% median)	# Above Income Limits (above 80% median)
		35%	55%	10%	

b. All CDBG grantees serving limited clientele will be required to use CEDO's **CDBG Beneficiary Self-Certification** form to collect beneficiary data including race, ethnicity, annual income, and family size. Is your organization willing and prepared to add this documentation to the intake process for your CDBG funded program by July 1, 2019?

☒ Yes      ☐ NO      ☐ Not Serving Limited Clientele (public facilities only)

3. Who is the project/program designed to benefit? Describe the project/program's target population, citing (if relevant) specific age, gender, income, community/location or other characteristic of the people this program is intended to serve. How do you select and reach your target population?

The target population - underserved, low resourced, and/or New American families with children from birth-five. We market this program through organizations in our community that are mission based to serve low to moderate income families. Once the family visits the EEL program, they are directed to fill out an initial enrollment form:

**Which of the following does your family receive?** ☐ SNAP or 3 Squares benefits ☐ Medicaid or Dr Dynasaur ☐ Earned Income Tax Credit ☐ WIC ☐ Head Start/ Early Head Start ☐ Reach Up ☐ Other State or Federal Assistance (please explain) ☐ None of the above

Participants are asked to fill out the initial one page registration form on their first visit to the EEL program. This form identifies the family as having low to moderate resources. It also identifies families that may have limited connections in the community (ex/ New Americans). After a return visit, they fill out a form that provides more detailed information allowing ECHO to provide the entire family with an ECHO pass for the year (not only caregiver and children attending EEL, but grandparents, older school age children that live in the household).

4. Describe the steps you take to make the project/program accessible, inclusive and culturally appropriate for the target population. \*

By partnering, ECHO and the Family Room can ease access and overcome two major barriers for participating children and their caregivers – financial and cultural. This free program will be a gateway for the more than 450 New American served by the Family Room to access additional social services. Family engagement is a key element of this program, which uses a two-generation approach: focusing on the needs of both parents/caregivers and children. Additionally, social workers accompany mothers and their children as part of the reunification process. While the LUND Center provides bussing for mothers and their children, transportation is still a key issue for many families who would attend. Holding the program at the Family Room two days a week has made the program accessible to many more. We provide free parking during the program.

## VII. Budget / Financial Feasibility

**1. Budget Narrative: Provide a clear description of what you will do with CDBG's investment in the project/program. How will you spend the money? Give specific details.**

Grant dollars will directly support a program director (8 hours weekly) and an early childhood educator teacher/trainer (32 hours) to develop and deliver programming costs related to project activities.

**2. If you plan to pay for staff with CDBG funding, describe what they do in relation to the specific service(s) / activity(ies) in your Project/Program Design.**

a.

Specific Service / Activity	Position/Title	Work Related to CDBG-Funded Activity	# of Hours per Week spent on this Specific Service / Activity	% of Hours per Week spent on this Specific Service / Activity to be paid with CDBG
Overseeing EEL	ECHO Youth Programs Manager	Early Childhood Education	8	20%
Implementing EEL	ECHO Early Learning Coordinator	Early Childhood Education	32	100%

b. All CDBG grantees that use CDBG funds for salaries must submit timesheets that capture total time and effort of staff members funded with CDBG. These timesheets must record CDBG hours worked, other hours worked, all funding sources, and a narrative for all CDBG and non-CDBG funded activities, and they must be signed by the employee and supervisor. Does your organization have the ability to implement a timekeeping system for CDBG funded staff that meets these requirements by July 1, 2019?   x   Yes        No        Not funding salaries

**3. Program/Project Budget**

Line Item	CDBG Funds	Other	Total
ECHO Youth Programs Manager	\$7,254	\$10,000	\$17,254
ECHO Early Learning Coordinator	\$42,746	\$19,654	\$62,400
Fringe/Payroll Taxes	\$0	\$30,268	\$30,268
ECHO Family Memberships	\$0	\$16,800	\$16,800
Supplies	\$0	\$5,000	\$5,000
Program Snack	\$0	\$6,080	\$6,080
Overhead	\$0	\$34,988	\$34,988
	\$50,000	\$122,790	\$172,790

#### 4. Funding Sources

	Project		Agency	
	Current	Projected	Current	Projected
CDBG	\$	\$ 50,000	n/a	n/a
State (specify)			n/a	n/a
Federal (specify)			n/a	n/a
United Way			n/a	n/a
Private (specify) A.D. Henderson Foundation Gibbs Family Fund Vermont Mutual Insurance Company	\$25,000 \$5,000 \$1,000	\$25,000 \$5,000 \$1,000	n/a	n/a
Program Income	0	0	n/a	n/a
Other (specify) Individual Private Donors	\$10,200	\$91,790	n/a	n/a
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 41,200</b>	<b>\$ 172,790</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>n/a</b>

#### 5. Of the total project cost, what percentage will be financed with CDBG?

$$\frac{\$ 50,000}{\$ 172,790} = 29\%$$
 CDBG Funding                      Total Program/Project Costs                      Percentage

#### 6. Of the total project cost, what would be the total cost per person?

$$\frac{\$ 172,790}{320} = \$ 540$$
 Total Program/Project Cost                      # Total Proposed Beneficiaries                      Cost Per Person

$$\frac{\$ 50,000}{320} = \$ 156.25$$
 Total Amount of CDBG Funding                      # Total Proposed Beneficiaries                      Cost Per Person CDBG Investment

#### 7. Why should CDBG resources, as opposed to other sources of funding, be used for this project?

The City of Burlington launched the Early Learning Initiative in 2018. The city has made a significant commitment to early childhood education, as there is a shortage in affordable quality care slots for children. In April the YMCA halted its early readiness program. More than 90 children from 70 local families would no longer have quality and affordable resources to adequately prepare them for kindergarten. Additionally, caregivers who used the program, 63% are New Americans from 20 countries, speaking 20 different languages. Ending the program will hurt Vermont's largest New American population, set the refugee resettlement program back a number of years, and remove a free option for low resourced families with limited early childcare and education options. Similar to the City of Burlington, ECHO understands the importance of early childhood education, which is why ECHO stepped in to take on the program for the community. This funding request will support the running of the program. Essentially, EEL will prepare children for the transition to formal preschool or kindergarten, will help caregivers feel more connected to the community, and is a safe place for parents and children who are going through a re-unification process as well as for caregivers with children receiving special services.

#### 8. Describe your use of community resources, including volunteers. Include any resources not listed in your budget. Will CDBG be used to leverage other resources?\*

Throughout the program year, we welcome guest speakers and visitors from other organizations to help highlight resources in the community. This includes dental hygienists from the Vermont Department of Health, police officers and firefighters from local agencies, youth services librarian



from Fletcher Free Library, and Vermont PBS music and education show personality Mister Chris, among others.

### ***VIII. Collaboration/Efficiency***

- 1. Give 1 or 2 examples of key successful collaboration(s) between your program/project and another agency/program/group to address the needs of the people you serve.**

Through our Open Door Access Program, ECHO partners with 53 social service agencies throughout the county, including King Street Center, Lund, Janice S. Munt Family Room, the Howard Center, Burlington Housing Authority, and the Department of Children and Families Burlington Office. We have established connections and trust with the staff at these organizations to help support ancillary resources and services to our families. We are currently partnering with PBS to give families direct access to technology through chromebooks and other devices.

- 2. Do identical or similar community programs exist? How does this program compliment or collaborate rather than duplicate services? What makes this program unique?**

We believe that this is a unique partnership and experience for these families.

- 3. Provide 1 example of how your agency has become more efficient in achieving your outcomes or managing your project/program.**

By partnering with the Janice S. Munt Family Room, EEL is able to utilize their facility space, social service partners, and translators to more fully support the needs of the over 450 New American community families living in the city.

### ***IX. Sustainability***

- 1. How will this project have a long-term benefit to the City of Burlington? If this program/project ends, how will that benefit continue?**

Citywide, families are having difficulty accessing affordable and quality childcare programs that ensure children are ready for successful school experiences. Parents/caregivers are strong assets for their children's education. EEL educators will engage caregivers on creating safe homes and raising safe kids, understanding children's behaviors, strategies for encouraging positive behavior, and by engaging and modeling how to provide quality early learning experiences, children in their care will be better prepared for kindergarten.

- 2. CDBG funding is intended for new or expanded services. If CDBG funding ends, will the project be able to continue?**

This is a critical moment in the program. Given ECHO's new mission to inspire and engage families in the joy of scientific discovery, wonder of nature, and care of Lake Champlain; and goal of Strategic Plan 2023 "Catalyze birth – 8th grade science learning in the region," ECHO has stepped up to assume full responsibility for EEL. This funding will support a critical need in our community—investing in school readiness for populations not being served by traditional preschools. Active fundraising through individuals and foundations has been ongoing and will continue if CDBG funding ends.

- 3. How will you prioritize the proposed project activities if you do not receive the full amount requested?**

There is no specific prioritization in a project of this nature - ECHO will assume full responsibility for EEL and will continue to provide the educators, curriculum, and support for the community members who need it most.

