



Requester Information

Legislator Name: Thompson, Jason E.

Created Date: January 29th 2025

Submitted Date: January 30th 2025

Section 1: Requester Details

Description:

Utah’s statewide Baby Watch Part C Early Intervention is a program established under the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). This program is designed to provide skilled developmental services for children from birth to 3 years old who have a developmental delay or diagnosed disability. Baby Watch provided services for nearly 16,000 children and their families in the state of Utah in FY 24. These services include physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, family training, special instruction and service coordination among others. This program is not income based and has no option for a waiting list.

Legislative designee contact information:

Name: Rep. Jason Thompson

Organization: House of Representatives

Position: Representative

Section 2: Funding Information

How will the appropriation be used?

Category		One-time	Ongoing
Personnel Services	2025:	\$3,100,000.00	\$4,603,400.00
	2026:	\$0.00	
In-State Travel	2025:	\$0.00	\$0.00
	2026:	\$0.00	
Out-of-State Travel	2025:	\$0.00	\$0.00
	2026:	\$0.00	



Baby Watch Support for Children 0-3

Social Services

Category	One-time	Ongoing
Supplies and Equipment	2025:	\$0.00
	2026:	\$0.00
Technology Purchases	2025:	\$0.00
	2026:	\$0.00
Infrastructure/Capital Investments	2025:	\$0.00
	2026:	\$0.00
Other Charges/Pass Thru	2025:	\$0.00
	2026:	\$0.00

Expenditure Total

One-time 2025	One-time 2026	Ongoing 2026
\$3,100,000.00	\$0.00	\$4,603,400.00

Funding Sources:

General Fund

Amount Requested:

2025 (One-time)	\$3,100,000.00
2026 (One-time)	\$0.00
2026 (Ongoing)	\$4,603,400.00

Revenue Total

One-time 2025	One-time 2026	Ongoing 2026
\$3,100,000.00	\$0.00	\$4,603,400.00

Is this a multi-year project?

Yes



Is this project scalable if the Legislature does not fund the full requested amount?

Yes

A short explanation describing how the project might be scaled?

While this funding is scalable, it would be very difficult to reach the needs and objectives of this RFA without the full amount of funding. Currently there are as many as 8 of the 14 programs statewide that are using money from outside sources to meet the financial obligations of this program. There has been no ongoing, significant funding increases since 2017, including no cost of living adjustments, increase in number of visits per enrolled child or increase in our rate of reimbursement per visit. This has led to significant decreases in staff and poor salaries when compared to competing organizations. Potential solutions could include continuing to decrease staff, offering no COLA, or finding money within DHHS that is not obligated and applying that to the Baby Watch request (of course this would likely not be able to be sustained as ongoing funding).

Section 3: Agency Information

Subjects:

Health and Wellbeing

Agency:

250 / Department of Health and Human Services

Type of entity to receive pass-through funding:

State Government

Grant recipient

No

Requested Direct Award Grant Recipient

Section 4: Performance Outcome Measurement



Who would benefit the most from this request (who is the target audience)?

The beneficiaries of this funding request would primarily be the children (0-3 years old) with disabilities and their families in Utah. With additional funding, children and families would benefit through better service patterns (ie. more appropriate number and quality of services), service provision by more experienced providers (due to increased retention of staff) and more focus on child find activities (increasing finding efforts for children needing services to be identified). Part C Early intervention programs would also benefit by increased retention and recruitment (through increased salaries) and decreased caseload (through hiring additional staff). Finally, the school system would benefit because ensuring that children needing EI services receive appropriate services decreases the need for further special education services in the schools.

What is this project or program intended to accomplish?

The funding for the Part C Early Intervention would allow the 14 individual programs to use the money to recruit and retain employees, rehire lost staff, and improve child find activities. This funding would begin the process of increasing salaries to market value to allow recruitment of and retention of quality staff. Current salaries are significantly lower than competing agencies and well below market value. Due to low salaries offered for positions needing to be filled, most if not all programs have unfilled positions. This funding would allow programs to hire the proper number of staff in their program to an appropriate level. Decreased staff quality and numbers puts additional strain on existing staff leading to burnout and poor retention rates. Finally, the funding will allow programs to focus more specifically on finding children in need of Part C Early Intervention services and better serve them once found. All in all, the funding allows for more qualified, long-term staff to be hired, more focus on finding children, thus improving the services and outcomes for children with disabilities and their families in Utah.



How will the Legislature know whether the project or program achieved its intended purpose?

Metrics of success 1. We will measure the number of children served statewide by the 14 Part C programs. This will be able to be accomplished using the BTOTS data management system and will be compared for FY24 and FY25 (pre funding) vs FY26 and FY27 (post funding). 2. We will measure the number of visits per child statewide by the 14 Part C programs. This will be able to be accomplished using the BTOTS data management system and will be compared for FY24 and FY25 (pre funding) vs FY26 and FY27 (post funding). 3. We will measure the number of new/returning positions filled using the funding through this RFA. We will collect this data from each program at the end of FY26 to see the immediate impact of the funding.

Section 5: Other Supporting Documents

Intent Language Documents

All funding under this RFA will be distributed equitably to the 14 programs in Utah through the finance office of Baby Watch. This will be done using the formula established by Baby Watch (based on number of kids served in each program). This RFA will be for a 20% increase in the current rate per visit. This is a reasonable request as there has been no increase in the rate per visit for providers since at least 2017 in spite of inflation and growth of Utah's population. Additionally, there would be an increase in the "small program fee" for the 5 programs currently receiving this adjustment from Baby Watch. This small program fee is designed to compensate for the additional burden (increased travel, difficulty hiring qualified providers, etc.) on providers in the frontier regions of the state. Each of the 14 programs will be responsible for the proper use of this funding based on contract requirements. Funds to the program to support administrative salaries will be required to fall within the 10% cap as noted in the program contracts with Baby Watch/DHHS.

Previous Funding Documents

<https://cobi.utah.gov/2024/1314/financials>

Full Time Employees

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