



MASSACHUSETTS
**Department of
Early Education and Care**



Joint Meeting of the Advisory and Workforce Councils

March 5, 2026

Agenda

Items for Discussion and Action

- Welcome, Introductions and Agency Updates
- Inter-Agency Early Education and Child Care Task Force
- EEC Portal Project Updates
- Workforce Pipeline Legislative Report



Inter-Agency Early Education and Child Care Task Force

About the Inter-Agency Task Force



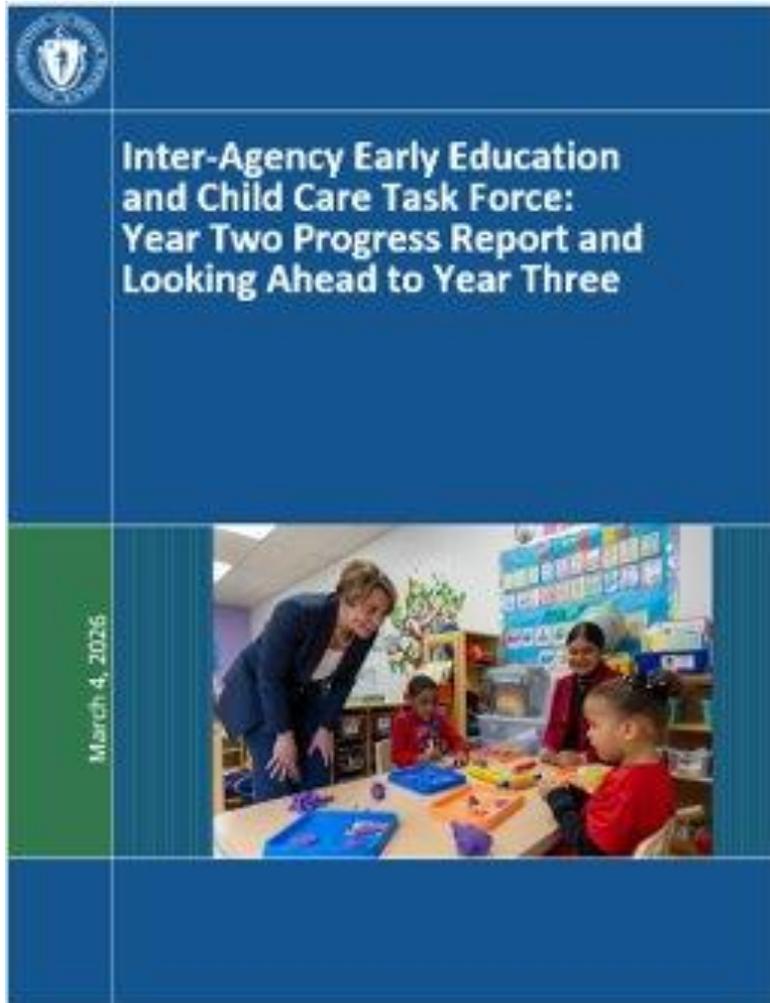
Established in 2024 by [Executive Order 625](#) to ensure that Massachusetts leads the nation in early education and child care access, affordability, equity, and quality.



The Inter-Agency Early Education and Child Care (IAEECC) Task Force takes a "whole of government" approach and has cross-Secretariat representation. The team engages with various stakeholders, including industry leaders, working parents and caregivers, and child care providers and experts.



The IAEECC Task Force Year Two Report is LIVE!



Visit the Mass.gov site to read the report:
[Early Education and Child Care Task Force | Mass.gov](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/early-education-and-child-care-task-force)



Report Structure

Provides updates on recommendation progress through December 2025 across 4 key areas



Accessibility & Affordability

Vision:

The Task Force envisions that all families can access and afford the early education and care options that meet their needs, inclusive of hours, location, and program characteristics.



Quality

Vision:

The Task Force envisions that early education and care programs in Massachusetts will have the resources they need to provide high-quality care including experienced and qualified educators, effective implementation of strong curricula, and ongoing support for professional learning and continuous quality improvement



Sustainable Business

Vision:

The Task Force envisions that early education and care providers receive adequate operational funding and administrative support to maintain and grow thriving businesses and new entrants to the sector have the support they need to develop their programs.



Workforce

Vision:

The Task Force envisions a robust workforce ecosystem where there are supported pathways to enter and meaningful growth opportunities to remain in the field, and where early education and care professionals are compensated competitively and commensurate with their skills, qualifications, and impact in educating young children.



Integrated

Task Force work has been implemented and has been incorporated into ongoing agency operations



Implementing

Rolling out the solution/project plan (e.g., hosting an event)



Developing

Building and refining the proposed solution/ project plan



Scoping

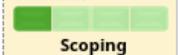
Defining the project plan, including issue statement and metrics for success

Increase affordability and accessibility of liability insurance

Recommendation

Under the leadership of the **Division of Insurance (DOI)**, a cross-agency group of stakeholders, including **EEC**, will work to identify potential solutions to increase the affordability and accessibility of liability insurance for early childhood providers.

Status:



Scoping

Progress

- Identified barriers to availability of liability insurance including high premiums and non-renewals
- Organized a cross-agency working group, led by DOI, to explore the challenges early education and care providers are facing and began to map out potential solutions
- Began research efforts to better understand the issues and potential solutions, including other states' solutions, and drafted several liability insurance questions for FCCs to include in the C3 survey

Next Steps

The working group will continue to scope the issue of availability and affordability of liability insurance and move towards mapping out any potential solutions in year three

Task Force Recommendations

Issue Area	Recommendation and Prioritization	Status
Access & Affordability	Leverage Family Resource Centers (FRCs)	Integrated
	Modernize EEC's IT systems	Implementing
	Improve family-friendly employer practices	Implementing
	Co-locate <u>child care</u> in housing developments	Developing
	Increase accessibility of <u>child care</u> on higher education campuses	Developing
	Improve traffic safety near EEC programs	Developing
	Expand access to the arts	Scoping
	Reduce local regulatory barriers	Scoping
Quality	Expand access to nature and the outdoors	Implementing
	Improve access to mental/behavioral health supports	Scoping
	Expand mental health professionals	Scoping
	Improve access to services for children with disabilities	Scoping
Sustainable Business	Expand business support to EEC sector	Implementing
	Increase access to broadband	Implementing
	Provide start-up support to FCC providers	Implementing
	Increase affordability & accessibility of liability insurance	Scoping
Workforce	Expand use of Registered Apprenticeship Programs in ECE	Integrated
	Create institutionalized EEC higher education pathway	Integrated
	Expand access to healthcare benefits	Developing
	Offer discounts to EEC educators	Developing
	Support early educators via the formal workforce system	Developing
	Expand access to retirement benefits	Scoping
	Identify opportunities to increase EEC compensation	Scoping

Year 2 Highlight

Expand Use of Registered Apprenticeship Programs in Early Childhood Education (ECE)

- Helped existing Registered Apprenticeship sponsors with credentialing, licensure, and related technical instruction
- Received the SAEF3 Competitive Grant from the U.S. Department of Labor for \$5 million for FY26-FY28 to rapidly scale ECE Registered Apprenticeship Programs
 - Round 1: Issued \$1.8M to eight organizations to scale the early education workforce and place over 300 apprentices.



Year 2 Highlight

Improve family-friendly employer practices



Employer Child Care Innovation Fund (ECCIF) Goals:

- Expand access to affordable, high-quality child care for working caregivers
- Expand capacity in the early education and child care sector
- Incentivize employers to advance family-friendly policies for their working caregiver employees



Year 2 Highlights

Provide Startup Support to FCC Providers

FCC Capital Grants

Round 1: \$2.7 million awarded to over 150 Family Child Care Educators.

Round 2: \$4 million in new funding.

Applicants can request up to \$25,000 to fund durable equipment and/or capital improvements.

Anticipated Grant Awards in Spring 2026



Increase Access to Broadband

Connected and Online

Initiative to distribute internet-enabled devices. Focused on Gateway Cities and rural communities, designed to expand access to education, workforce training, and telehealth.

Devices are fully equipped with software, accessories, and warranties at no cost to awardees, funded through the U.S. Treasury Capital Projects Fund (CPF).

522 devices awarded to early education and care providers in 2025



Expand Access to the Arts

In partnership with the Mass Cultural Council (MCC), developing a publishable inventory of art and cultural institutions that offer discounts to educators (early education and care, K-12, and higher education) to share with educators.

EEC will promote MCC's grant opportunities to early education and care programs.



Year 2 Highlights

Expand Access to Health Care Benefits

Partnered with MA Health Connector to conduct info sessions, reaching over 200 educators

Coming Soon: Joint webinar with Health Connector and MassHealth to explain options for businesses and individuals



Leverage Family Resource Centers

The Department of Children and Families (DCF) and EEC held multiple planning meetings to identify ways to strengthen ways of working between FRCs and the EEC Coordinated Family and Community Engagement (CFCE) network

Completed a mapping activity to strengthen partnerships between FRC and CFCE programs across the Commonwealth, resulting in additional joint programs being offered to children and families (e.g., early literacy groups, shared playgroups, and parenting resource distribution programs)



Increase Accessibility of Child Care on Higher Education Campuses

Met with leaders from all Massachusetts public universities & community colleges to discuss the importance of child care and identify ways to support the creation of more child care on campuses. Established a regular working group of designees from each institution to discuss child care challenges, opportunities, and share learnings across different models.



Executive Office of Education

Looking Ahead...

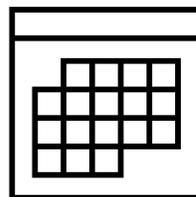
Early Childhood Governance and Finance Project (ECGFP) 2026 Cohort

Massachusetts/EEC was recently accepted into a national initiative supported by the Heising-Simons and W.K. Kellogg Foundations in partnership with the New Venture Fund to support the work of the Task Force.

This funding will help strengthen the Task Force's project management and coordination across agencies to track progress, speed up improvements, and oversee new pilot programs -- showing how a more connected early childhood system can work effectively.



As the Task Force enters its third and final year, it will remain focused on **advancing and deepening implementation** of identified solutions, while ensuring that **cross-agency relationships** and structures are integrated **sustainably** into the way state agencies work together **to support the early education and care system for years to come.**



The Task Force will hold a Year 3 Launch event this spring.

Details coming soon!



EEC Portal Project Updates



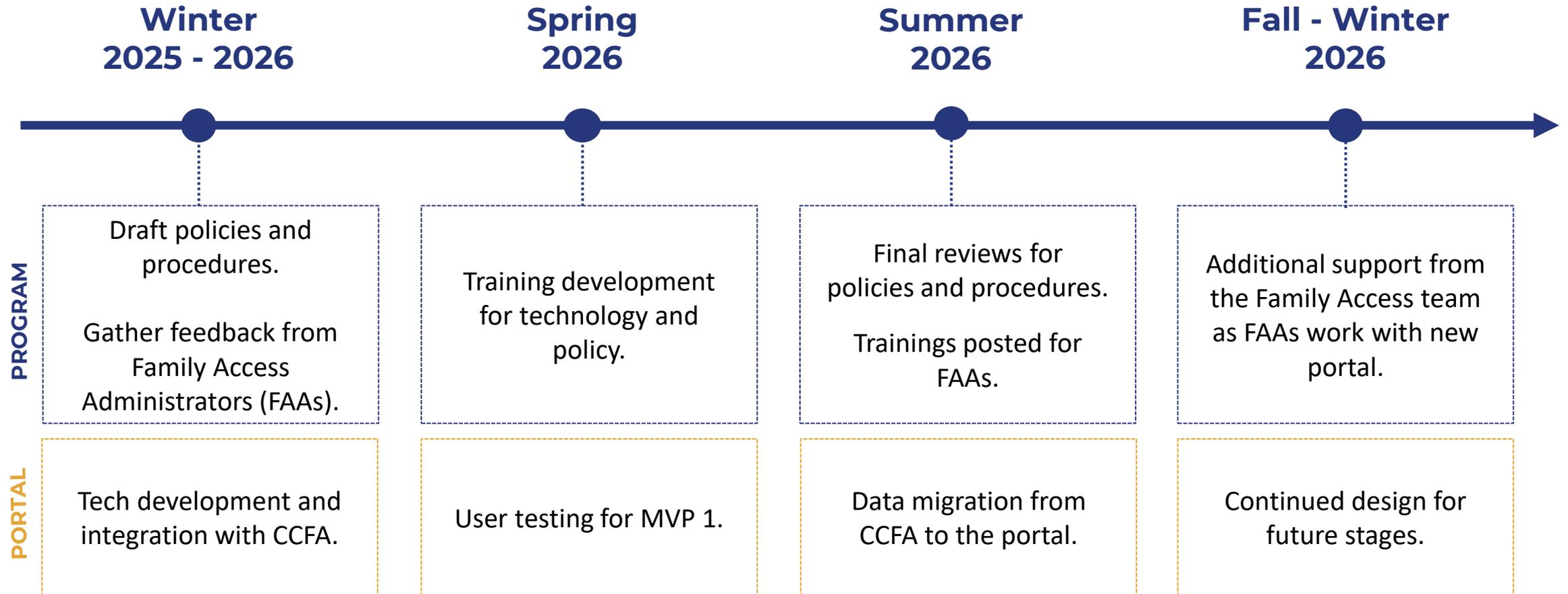
Family Portal

Update: MyChildCareMA (Family Portal)

- First public launch of system scheduled for May
 - The rollout of the new system will include training opportunities and its new procedures for use of the system in multiple languages.
- This launch will allow:
 - Families to add themselves to the waitlist
 - Families to fill out an application for financial assistance
 - Basic integration with the CCFA billing/payments system to keep systems in sync
- Next up:
 - Next release will have more functionality for Family Access Administrators doing eligibility review, including receiving referrals from DTA/DCF

Timeline for the Family Portal

EEC is working to coordinate both the policy and tech to support family access to a future state for CCFA



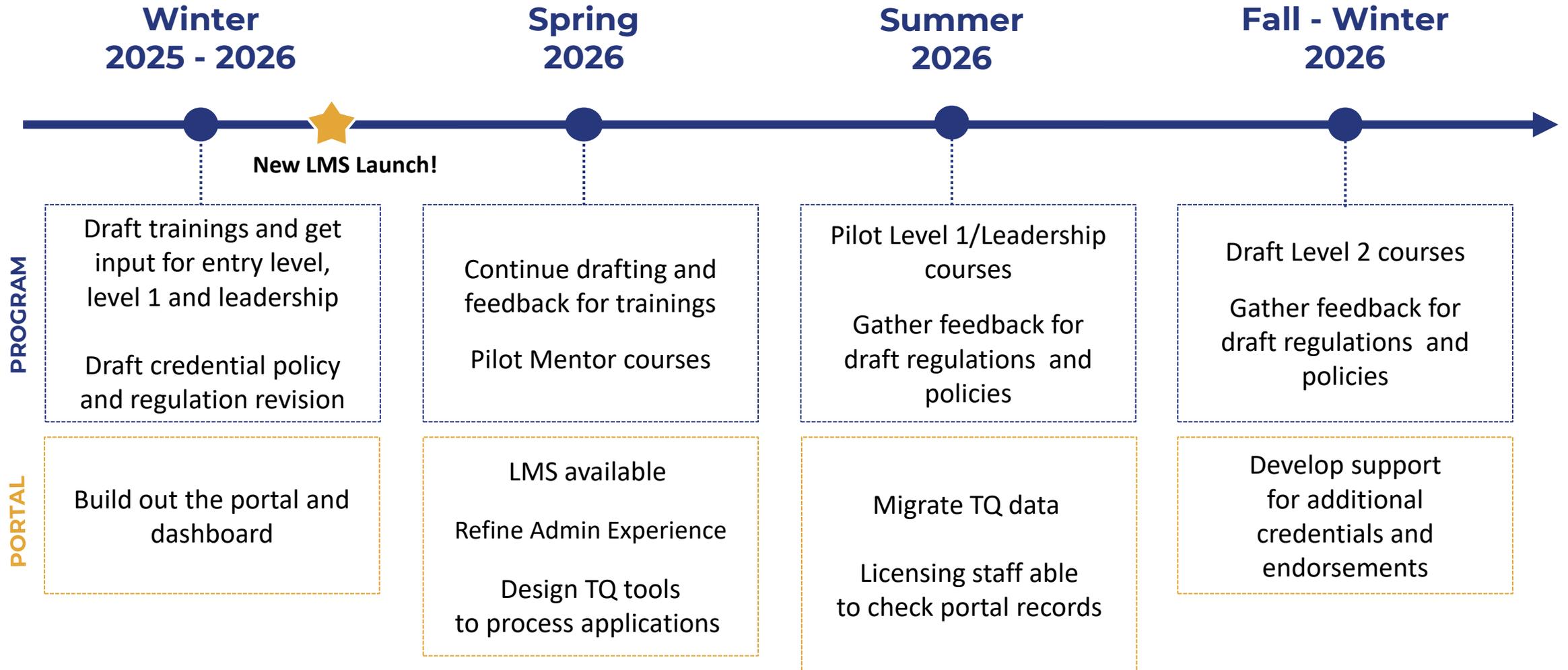


Professional Portal

Update: EEC Professional Portal

- Next key launch incorporates the new LMS (StrongStart) system going live
 - Users will be able to login to the Portal and the LMS with the same username and password
 - Bringing over course completion data from old LMS to be associated with new accounts
- Launch now anticipated in late March or early April
 - LMS vendor needs additional time to support shared login and ensure we can match old and new LMS accounts
- Subsequent launches will bring in previously earned EEC certifications and registry (PQR) replacement workflows

Professional Portal & Credential Roadmap





Workforce Pipeline Legislative Report

Workforce Pipeline Legislative Report

This report satisfies the requirements set forth in the Fiscal Year 2025 Budget:

The Department of Early Education and Care (EEC), in consultation with the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD), the Commonwealth Corporation (CommCorp) and the Early Education and Care Workforce Council shall conduct a study and submit a report making recommendations to

- a) enhance the early education and care workforce pipeline, and
- b) develop strategies and prioritization of programming and funding opportunities to ensure that the early educator workforce meets the needs of the Commonwealth.

The report shall include, but shall not be limited to, recommendations on:

- Recruiting new early education and care providers
- Developing apprenticeship programs and non-traditional recruitment opportunities as part of a curriculum-based service-learning program
- Collaborating with early education and care providers and vocational schools with curricula that include early education and care
- Retaining early educators
- Incentivizing the development of family child care providers
- Exploring the potential for the growth of family child care providers into center-based programs

Workforce Pipeline Report

EEC is drafting a report with updates and recommendations reflecting existing workforce development efforts at EEC and through the Task Force.

New and expanded pathways for educators



- Registered Apprenticeship Programs in ECE
- Consistent and aligned higher education pathway
- New educator credential
- Stronger workforce system alignment
- Increasing chapter 74 schools with early education programs

Compensation and benefits



- Offer discounts to EEC educators
- Loan repayment and scholarships
- Healthcare and retirement
- Commonwealth Cares for Children (C3)

Business supports for Family Child Care



- FCC incubator pilots
- Business Front Door access with dedicated navigator support
- Pre-licensing support
- Capital grants