



## PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS FOR EARLY LEARNING: THE CASE FOR PHILANTHROPY INVOLVEMENT

Public-private partnerships have become an increasingly effective strategy for drawing together the resources and know-how that are needed to expand and improve supports and services. Achieving school readiness for all young children is a large goal with wide-reaching implications for children, families, communities and the economy. It is difficult to accomplish or finance this exclusively through any single entity; public-private partnerships can be part of the solution.

Public-Private Partnerships for early learning align with the philanthropic community's broader agenda to support quality education and, in doing so, create greater equity and promote healthy children, families, and communities. Participation in these partnerships also poses additional benefits to the mission and operation of philanthropic organizations. Namely, public-private partnerships help philanthropic organizations in the following ways:

### Leverage their investments

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Philanthropic organizations are often looking to leverage their investments to improve the ways that States and communities address the needs of children and families. To this end, philanthropic organizations are increasingly recognizing the usefulness of public-private partnerships. Further, investments in high-quality early education yield significant returns on investment - from 12 to 16 percent.<sup>1</sup> Savings are accrued via higher high school graduation rates, greater likelihood of future employment and increased lifelong earning potential, better health, lower expenditures on special education, lower incarceration rates, and lower dependence on social welfare.

These impressive returns are not only beneficial to investors but also to society as a whole.

**Tip:** Many philanthropic organizations prefer to "seed" promising initiatives, which can be powerful in leveraging additional public and private funds. Using existing relationships with philanthropies can help develop new ones. Some philanthropies make presentations to philanthropic colleagues to help a partnership raise additional funds. They are typically well connected to both public and private leaders and are often successful at getting high-level business and public leaders to the table.

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<sup>1</sup> Rolnic, A., and Grunewald, R. (2003). *Early childhood development: economic development with a high public return*. Minneapolis, MN: Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis. Retrieved from <http://minneapolisfed.org/pubs/fedgaz/03-03/opinion.cfm>.

## Engage in activities that accomplish their charitable purpose

Philanthropic organizations typically get involved in partnerships to accomplish the charitable purpose for which they were created. Effective partnerships know how to collaborate with philanthropies that have interests and goals that align with those of the partnership.

**Tip:** Research and target foundations that have a focused interest in early childhood development, economic development, community problem solving, and early childhood or education system development. If the partnership is already well positioned in the community, foundations may even approach the partnership to leverage their own resources.

## Maximize their impact

Partnerships provide an opportunity for philanthropic organizations to work in cooperation with the broader community as part of a responsive grantmaking strategy. Through participation in partnerships, philanthropies can not only further their organization's mission, but also broaden their impact by capitalizing on what partnerships can achieve, including:

- Leveraging expertise across sectors;
- Ensuring more efficient use of time and resources;
- Preventing duplication of efforts;
- Garnering wider public and private support for and investment in early education initiatives by engaging the unique constituencies and connections of each partner; and
- Creating leadership across diverse sectors that ensures that initiatives can withstand changes in political leadership and maintain a consistent, bipartisan focus.



**For more information about public-private partnerships and how they can be instrumental in bolstering state early learning initiatives, see the full range of topics included on this topic, available at <https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/state-systems-specialist-network>:**

- *What is a Public-Private Partnership and Why Do They Matter?*
- *Public-Private Partnerships: Getting Started and Principles for Success;*
- *Making the Case for Business Community Involvement;*
- *Making the Case for Government Involvement;*
- *Summary of State Profiles of Successful Public-Private Partnerships for Early Learning; and*
- *Individual State Profiles of Successful Public-Private Partnerships for Early Learning.*

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