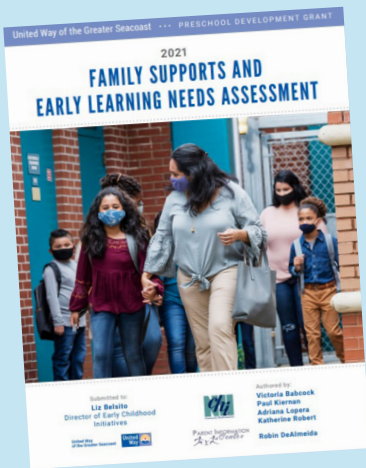




Granite United Way Greater Seacoast Region



Granite United Way



Granite United Way Greater Seacoast Region has a long history of leveraging local partnerships to build equitable, thriving communities and deliver innovative, effective, and lasting solutions. Formerly part of the United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Merrimack Valley, the Seacoast Region recently became part of Granite United Way to achieve greater community impact in New Hampshire. Granite United Way Greater Seacoast Region supports the Somersworth Ready Together Coalition that works to help families better prepare their children for success in kindergarten and beyond. The Coalition's goal is to engage all families of the 832 children between the ages of zero to five.

Funded Project 1: Needs Assessment

PROJECT: With Preschool Development Grant funding, Granite United Way Greater Seacoast Region contracted with the Community Health Institute/JSI to conduct a needs assessment. The purpose of the assessment was to understand the availability and accessibility of family support services across the Greater Seacoast region, especially for populations and communities that are under-resourced or experiencing vulnerabilities that impact their ability to thrive.

Throughout the assessment process, the Granite United Way Greater Seacoast Region engaged community stakeholders, including representatives from local family resource centers, social service agencies, school districts, and childcare programs. Granite United Way Greater Seacoast Region also engaged with the Parent Information Center to ensure family voice was considered in the data collection process. Finally, the National Center for Child Poverty provided their data collection framework to ensure the local process aligned with statewide assessment efforts.

IMPACT: The assessment highlighted systemic challenges facing families and the challenges they experience navigating complicated care and support systems. Through the assessment process, Granite United Way Greater Seacoast Region recognized the importance of increased access to high-quality, affordable early care and learning programs and the need to help families maximize their utilization of available resources.

Funded Project 2: Capacity Building Through Shared Services

PROJECT: To build the capacity of the early childhood system in the Greater Seacoast Region utilized Preschool Development Grant funding to establish a local Shared Business Service Hub. The Shared Business Service Hub is a cutting-edge shared services model for early childhood programs that strengthens business practices, improves sustainability, and enhances program quality to give children a better start. The Shared Business Service Hub business



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“The opportunities for the Greater Seacoast Region to leverage its role as an advocate, convener and investor in the community are broad, given the future of the PDG B-5 regionalized focus. The Greater Seacoast Region should maintain its prioritization of the provider and community voice in its work, and continue its efforts in promoting systemic solutions to address community-identified challenges..”

(2021 Family Supports and Early Learning Needs Assessment)



model eliminates the duplication of work and helps programs benefit from economies of scale and specialization.

Grant funds enabled the development of the Greater Seacoast hub with four founding Shared Business Service Hub programs in Strafford County with a long history of collaboration.

IMPACT: The Shared Business Service Hub launched in January 2021 with participating early child-hood programs benefiting from shared accounts receivable services for billing and fee collection of tuition for private pay, scholarship eligible, and Early Head Start children. Participating programs also benefited from shared accounts payable, payroll, human resources support, and financial advisement. While the unprecedented circumstances of the pandemic impacted the implemented timeline, the Shared Business Service Hub has resulted in the following benefits to early childhood programs:

- Upgraded childcare management and accounting software to maximize automation;
- Automatic, reoccurring electronic payments to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of fee collection;
- Enhanced monitoring of family balances to ensure full fee collection;
- Expedited enrollment of children when a classroom vacancy becomes available; and
- Updated policies and procedures to ensure strong financial monitoring to reduce mistakes.



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