**June 10, 2021**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Contacts:**

Stephanni Renn

Vice President Early Childhood Programs

Sixpence Administrator

[srenn@nebraskachildren.org](mailto:srenn@nebraskachildren.org)

402-239-5920

Karen Pinkelman

Associate Vice President Early Childhood Programs

Sixpence Administrative Educational Specialist

[kpinkelman@nebraskachildren.org](mailto:kpinkelman@nebraskachildren.org)

402-366-8374

**Sixpence Early Learning Fund announces new grant opportunity to promote   
community-based programs serving children prenatal-to-age-three**

LINCOLN, NE—The Board of Trustees of the Sixpence Early Learning Fund announced today that it will accept proposals this summer for a new round of grant awards to help communities establish new or expand existing early childhood programs for very young children at risk and their families.

The Request for Proposal (RFP) and supporting application documents will be published on the Sixpence Early Learning Fund website ([www.SingaSongofSixpence.org](http://www.SingaSongofSixpence.org)) on June 10, 2021.

The Sixpence Early Learning Fund is Nebraska’s signature public-private initiative to promote community-based programs focused on the developmental needs of children prenatal-to-age-three (PN-3), especially those most likely to encounter obstacles to their healthy cognitive, social-emotional and physical development. Eligible applicants for Sixpence grants are local school districts and cooperatives of school districts that include at least one community-based organization. Currently, Sixpence funds 40 grantees in locations throughout the state, delivering services through home visiting programs, center-based child care programs and school-community child care partnerships. Sixpence-funded programs served approximately 1,800 children PN-3 in 2020.

The new grants were made possible through a funding increase for Sixpence proposed in LB342 by   
Senator John Stinner of Gering, Appropriations Committee chair. The proposal, was subsequently incorporated into the state’s mainline budget bill, allocating an additional $2.5 million per year to Sixpence   
for the next two years.

The funding increase is, in part, a response to the upheaval caused by COVID-19 in child care and other early childhood systems. “It’s hard to overstate the pressure that the pandemic has put on parents who are trying to guide the development of their children while providing for their families,” said Stephanni Renn, who serves as Sixpence Administrator at Nebraska Children and Families Foundation. “The new Sixpence grant awards will help offset at least some of those challenges so more of our youngest kids are getting a stronger start in life.”

The Request for Proposal (RFP) and supporting application documents will be published on the Sixpence Early Learning Fund website ([www.SingaSongofSixpence.org](http://www.SingaSongofSixpence.org)) on June 10, 2021. Additionally, a district contact or community partner must attend the RFP webinar to apply. The live webinar will be held at the time below, however, it will also be recorded for viewing at a later date.

* **Monday, June 21, 2021**| 4:00 to 5:00 p.m. CST | <https://zoom.us/j/94285006957>

**About Sixpence**: Sixpence is the public name of the Nebraska Early Childhood Education Endowment Fund, a public-private mechanism established in 2006 to generate sustainable funding for high-quality programs serving children at risk and their families, prenatal-to-age-three. Sixpence issues grant awards and offers technical assistance to locally controlled early childhood partnerships under the supervision of a governor-appointed Board of Trustees. Sixpence is administered by Nebraska Children and Families Foundation which serves as the private endowment provider required by state statute. For more information, visit [www.SingaSongofSixpence.org](http://www.SingaSongofSixpence.org).

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