



Early Childhood Iowa
ECI Area Board Designation– General Policies
Effective July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2026
Tool N

I. Purpose:

To receive ECI funds, the ECI State Board must designate the ECI area board.

II. Legal References:

Iowa Code 256I.4(8):

8. Develop and implement a designation process for area boards. Allow for flexibility and creativity of area boards in implementing area board responsibilities and provide authority for the area boards to support the communities in the areas served. The system shall provide for action to address poor performing areas as well as higher performing areas. The state board shall determine how often area boards are reviewed under the system.

The Early Childhood Iowa State Board will adopt policies and criteria to further define and implement the designation process.

III. Identification of Status

Designated:

- The board is designated as long as they follow the steps outlined in the guidance.
- The designation period is four (4) years unless a triggered change occurs. (Section VI)
- Refer to the Designation Cycle Calendar (Section IX)

IV. Categories and Documentation Area Boards must submit through this Process:

The designation process is a continuous improvement process that reviews board operations and expectations within the following categories throughout the designation period. The following are items submitted through the designation cycle. A more-detailed description of these items, where and how to be submitted is found in Section VIII.

A. Annual submissions

- Annual report, including community plan updates
- Annual budget
- Annual contract
- Annual Fiscal Agent Agreement
- Mid-year financial update
- Contract monitoring schedule
- Fiscal audit

B. Year of designation submissions and site visit:

Items to be submitted electronically on or before October 31 of the year of designation. (See Tool NN for definitions and guidance.)

- Community needs assessment to lead the local early care, health and education system (If this is a separate document from the comprehensive community plan.)
- Community plan for the local early care, health and education system
- Board strategic plan (If this is a separate document from the comprehensive community plan.)

C. Mid-Cycle Review:

Items reviewed between years two and three of designation include:

- ECIA Quality Assurance Review of Contract Award and Monitoring (review of contracts issued by the area board.)
- 2 contract files from the either the last completed fiscal year or the current fiscal year (as selected by the State TA Team) Assurances listed in the annual contract. (Sample selection of required assurances determined by the state TA Team.)
- Polices & Procedures (items selected by the State TA Team)

An improvement plan may be applicable throughout the four-year process and does not necessarily mean conditional designation. For example, an area board may have an improvement plan when too much time has transpired in a board vacancy for a required perspective.

V. Procedures for On-Site Review/Review Schedule the year of Designation Submissions (See attached schedule):

The following meetings can be scheduled either on-site or virtually.

Meeting	Participants	Length	Responsibility/ Materials	Purpose
Pre-meeting on day of Designation Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ECI State TA Team Reviewers • ECI Area Board staff 	½ hour		Discuss any questions from the reviewers based on materials submitted. This may be a little more technical in nature.
Board Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ECI Area Board • ECI Area Board staff or director • ECI State TA Team Reviewers • Community partners/public • ECI State Board members are invited to attend as they are able 	1.5 hours	<p>ECI Area: Secure location if conducted in person Post mtg. for public notice</p> <p>TA Team: Review submitted materials. Prepare questions. Provide summary documentation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss materials submitted • Discussion of area board goals for upcoming years • Discussion of areas of concern as well as strengths • Discuss partnerships and/or collaborative relationships for the local early childhood system • High level of technical responsibilities, i.e. policies and procedures
Community Partner Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ECI State TA Team Reviewers • Community partners/public 	1 hour	<p>ECI Area: Secure location if conducted in person Invite partners</p> <p>TA Team: Provide a summary of input received from the community partners to the area board.</p>	Partners share about the participation and collaboration with the ECI Area Board and perspectives of the local early childhood system
Follow-up meeting on day of Designation Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ECI State TA Team Reviewers • ECI Area Board staff or director 	½ hour	TBD based on reviewers' questions/needs for clarification	<p>Discuss any questions from the reviewers based on materials submitted</p> <p>Discuss any final questions from the reviewers</p>

VI. Events that May Trigger an Improvement Plan and/or Review and possibly Change in Designation Status:

There are times when a designation review must take place before the next scheduled review date. At the discretion of the State TA Team or the ECI State Board, the following may trigger a change in the review schedule and/or an on-site visit with the area board:

- An ECI area director (coordinator) change*
- Results from the State’s monitoring review
- Findings from an independent financial audit*
- Carry forward of more than 20% of either funding stream
- A boundary change
- Noncompliance with legislative requirements
- A complaint by an ECI board member or an individual or agency within the ECI area

*The area board must notify the ECI Office within 10 business days of a change in the ECI area director (coordinator) or findings from an independent financial audit.

VII. Completion of the Review Process – Final Steps: (following the site visit)

The Designation Review Team will discuss recommendations with the full State TA Team to make a recommendation and share written feedback and notes and summary materials to the area board.

The State TA Team will submit a recommendation of full or conditional designation. Designation is for a period of four (4) years. The State TA Team provides a summary with the recommendation, a copy of the review matrix and any other pertinent information to the ECI State Board.

If there is an area board on a improvement action plan, the time periods are adjusted to address the situation.

The State Board will review and discuss the recommendations and:

- a. Approve the recommendation as presented;
- b. Not approve the recommendation as presented; or
- c. Seek additional information prior to approval/non-approval.

An appeal policy is available on the state ECI website under the state board policies.

VIII. General Timeline to assist with the process:

Annual Submissions*

Date Due	Function	Submit to Whom	Submit Where
January 15	Submit Mid-Year Financial Report	ECI State Office	IowaGrants
June 15	Submit annual budget	ECI State Office	IowaGrants
July 1	Submit annual contract. Effective FY '21 went electronic versions only.	ECI State Office	Electronic process created for automatic submittal through technology.
July 1	Submit copy of signed fiscal agent agreement.	ECI State Office	IowaGrants (cannot be submitted until an approved budget.)
September 15	Submit annual report information/data	ECI State Office	IowaGrants
September 30	Submit contract monitoring schedule	ECI State Office	IowaGrants
Third quarter following the fiscal year closed	Submit annual audit	ECI State Office	IowaGrants

***Note:** Depending on needs, the ECI State Office or the ECI State Board may require additional submissions.

Mid-Cycle Review (Between Year 2 and 3 of designation cycle)

Due Date	Function
April – October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 contract files from either the last completed fiscal year or the current fiscal (as selected by the State TA Team) • Proof of Assurances (items selected by the State TA Team) • Policies & Procedures (items selected by the State TA Team)

Year of Designation

Date Due	Function
October 31 st	Submit via email and upload to area board’s designation Google Folder, if accessible: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community needs assessment for the local early care, health and education system (if different from community plan) • Community plan for the local early care, health and education system

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Area Board strategic plan (if different from community plan)
November - April		The State reviews materials submitted and conducts a site visit with the ECIA.
April and June Board Meeting		<p>The State TA Team provides a summary with the designation recommendation, a copy of the review matrix and any other pertinent information to the ECI State Board.</p> <p>The ECI State Board determines the area's designation status.</p>
July 1 st (beginning of next fiscal year)		Designation is effective for a four-year period.

IX. Designation Cycle Calendar

Submit Materials -- October 31, 2022 (Mid-Cycle April – October 2024)

Benton Tama	Chickasaw Floyd Mitchell
Boone Story	Clarke Decatur Wayne
Bremer Butler Franklin Grundy	Clay Dickinson O'Brien Osceola
Cerro Gordo Hancock Worth	Des Moines Henry Louisa Washington
	Polk

Submit Materials October 31, 2023 (Mid-Cycle April – October 2021)

Adams Ringgold Taylor Union	Harrison Monona Shelby
Appanoose Davis Lucas Monroe	Jasper Marion Poweshiek
Buena Vista Crawford Sac	Linn
Cherokee Lyon Plymouth Sioux	Mahaska Wapello
Emmet Kossuth Palo Alto Winnebago	Pottawattamie

Submit Materials October 31, 2024 (Mid-Cycle April – October 2022)

Adair Dallas Madison Warren	Cedar Jones
Allamakee Clayton Howard Winneshiek	Dubuque
Audubon Carroll Greene Guthrie	Hardin Marshall
Black Hawk	Ida Woodbury
Calhoun Pocahontas Webster	Iowa Jefferson Keokuk

Submit Materials October 31, 2025 (Mid-Cycle April – October 2023)

Buchanan Delaware Fayette	Johnson
Cass Mills Montgomery	Lee Van Buren
Clinton Jackson	Muscatine
Fremont Page	Scott
Hamilton Humboldt Wright	