**Fiscal Year 2024 Early Childhood Block Grant**

**Preschool for All, Preschool for All Expansion, and Prevention Initiative**

**Frequently Asked Questions - Updated April 19, 2023**

| Question | Answer |
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| 1. When is the proposal due? | Proposals are due no later than 4 p.m. on June 14, 2023. |
| 2. How do I submit the proposal? | Proposals can be submitted electronically through the ISBE Attachment Manager. Completed proposals should be scanned into PDF with all supporting documents and required signatures and submitted. Go to "System Quick Links" in the upper left corner of the ISBE homepage and click on "Send ISBE a file" at the bottom of the dropdown. Choose "Early Childhood RFP" from the dropdown menu in Receiver Information of the Attachment Manager. Submit the application using the "Submit" button at the bottom of the page. |
| 3. How was the FY 2024 ECBG Priority List of "preschool deserts" determined? | Preschool deserts are a funding priority of the FY 2024 Request for Proposal (RFP).<br><br>The following data sources were used to determine preschool deserts as a Priority List was developed for the FY 2024 ECBG:<br>• 2022 Illinois Early Childhood Asset Map data (i.e., number of Head Start and ECBG programs by county – excluding Chicago)<br>• 2020 Census data (i.e., data on poverty levels, number of children living in poverty)<br>• 2023 ECBG data (i.e., newly awarded programs, continuation programs, estimated number of children served, actual number of children served) |
| 4. What additional support is available to applicants for the FY 2024 RFP process? | • There will be three Training and Technical Assistance (TTA) Webinars for the FY 2024 RFP.<br>• The Birth to Five Regional Team will provide outreach and coordination support for applicants wishing to apply for funding.<br>• Additional time and support will be allowed for newly awarded programs to start up.<br>• Analysis of feedback from the FY 2024 RFP listening sessions resulted in ISBE updating the application to eliminate repetitive questions and provide more clarity pertaining to the eligibility of community-based organizations and family childcare homes. TTA sessions also have been added.<br>• Finally, model/example RFPs are linked in the RFP as a resource for applicants — one from a school district and one from a community-based organization. |

5. Preschool for All RFP updated on April 19, 2023

- Page 4, Technical Assistance Session: May 8 – Added **community-based organizations as targeted audience.**
- Page 4 – Added link to an RFP model/example.
- Page 15, language corrected – Section 4: **Cost Effectiveness (10 points).**
- Page 15, Priority Consideration (first criteria) – Language corrected to **3-and 4-year- children.**

6. Preschool for All Expansion RFP updated on April 19, 2023

- Page 4, Technical Assistance Session: May 8 – Added **community-based organizations as targeted audience.**
- Page 4 – Added link to an RFP model/ example.
- Page 15, Priority Consideration (first criteria) – Language corrected to **3-and 4-year-old children.**

7. Prevention Initiative RFP updated on April 19, 2023

- Page 1, Eligible Applicants: Changed wording to **3- and 4-year-old eligible children**.
- Page 4, Technical Assistance Session: May 8 – Added **community-based organizations as targeted audience.**
- Page 4 – Added link to RFP model/examples.
- Page 7 – Added language:
  **Funding may be used to ensure that staff in community-based programs receive compensation on par with what they would make working for the local school district with the same qualifications, education, and experience**.
  **Home visiting programs may refer to the to the [Home Visiting Cost Model document](#) to learn more about suggested salaries. The salaries in the document are not required.**
- Page 15, Priority Consideration (first criteria) – Language corrected **to 3- and 4-year-old eligible children.**

8. Must applicants know the sites to be used at time of application?

Yes, sites are requested on Attachment 5.

9. Can family child care homes apply by themselves?

DCFS family child care homes are eligible to apply in joint applications with an administrative agent from a Local Education Agency (LEA) or other eligible applicant.

10. Should currently funded slots be included in the proposal narrative and budget?

The FY 2024 RFP should only be written for new slots. ECBG programs that are currently funded are not to complete the RFP application to maintain current funding unless the entity wishes to apply for additional slots to expand their program under this application. The budget in the application should only reflect new slots.

11. Can currently funded programs complete the grant to request additional funding to support the current program?

The FY 2024 RFP is only for new slots.

12. If an existing program does not currently receive funding, are they eligible to apply?

The FY 2024 RFP is open to new programs or programs who currently receive funding and wish to apply for additional slots.

13. Is there a rate per student or a maximum amount applicable to request?

Total amount of funding available for the Preschool for All program is contingent on appropriation by the Illinois General Assembly. ISBE anticipates making individual grant awards depending on information included in the proposal. Awarded funding will reflect the cost of operating a program for a minimum of 165 student attendance days per year. **ISBE reserves the right to determine the number of slots awarded based on the number of slots the community needs to serve at least 80% of eligible children. As a result, applicants may not be awarded for the full number of slots requested.**

14. Does a district/regions inclusion on the Priority List provide sufficient evidence of the need?

Yes. Please refer to the Priority List Instructions on the RFP webpage for how this list should be used.

15. If funded with these awards, would programs write to keep these slots in the new RFP grant cycle that is slated to be released in two years?

Any new slots awarded through the FY 2024 RFP and all current ECBG slots will be funded for FY 2024 and FY 2025, contingent on appropriation by the Illinois General Assembly.

16. If a program has a greater slot gap for birth to 3, will this data be taken into consideration for Prevention Initiative slots -- even if these locations are not located in a preschool desert?

Please refer to the RFP review criteria.

17. If using the Attachment Manager: Can items be uploaded individually over time, or does it have to be uploaded collectively at one time?

Each application should be uploaded as one document per funding opportunity.

18. Are entities looking to write required to submit a "letter of intent"?

An intent to apply is not requested.

19. Can a center-based application be considered as serving more than one community/ZIP code? How are points awarded?

Applicants are to list the area to be served in their application. Priority points are awarded, as applicable.

20. How is the Priority List data and requirement applicable to Prevention Initiative home visiting programs?

Prevention Initiative programs will receive priority points if their community is on the preschool desert list.

21. Will applicants receive the details of their award scores after the review?

A program may request their scores and reviewer comments after the final awards have been made.

22. Can private schools, licensed exempt day cares, or community organizations apply alone or do they need joint applications?

Eligible Applicants: Currently funded and new Early Childhood Block Grant Preschool for All 3-5 programs from Regional Offices of Education, public school districts; university laboratory schools approved by ISBE; charter schools; area vocational centers; and public or private not-for-profit or for-profit entities with experience in providing educational, health, social, and/or child development services to young children and their families are eligible to submit a proposal for the Preschool for All program for 3- to 5-year-olds.

23. If a program is located near a child care desert, can transportation funds be requested in the proposal in order to service neighboring child care deserts?

Transportation is an allowable cost in the early childhood block grant program.

24. If a current program wants to propose a program for a new geographic area, does the program create a new application or are those considered additional slots?

New slots are those that are in addition to the program's current funded enrollment.

25. Can an organization submit multiple applications for different geographic areas?

An entity may submit one application per grant. If serving multiple geographic areas, that must be indicated in the application.

26. If an applicant proposes to develop a licensed family child care home in a preschool desert area, would that be considered as a fundable program model under Prevention Initiative?

A family child care home is an approved model under the Prevention Initiative program. However, a family child care home must be currently operating to be included in the grant application.

27. Can a not-for-profit organization apply for an Early Childhood Block Grant?

Eligible Applicants: Currently funded and new Early Childhood Block Grant Preschool for All 3-5 programs from Regional Offices of Education, public school districts; university laboratory schools approved by ISBE; charter schools; area vocational centers; and public or private not-for-profit or for-profit entities with experience in providing educational, health, social, and/or child development services to young children and their families are eligible to submit a proposal for the Preschool for All program for 3- to 5-year-olds.

28. Will RFP documents be available in other languages?

RFP documents will be translated in Spanish.

29. Can a current Preschool for All grantee write a proposal for Preschool for All Expansion program as a new grantee?

Any eligible applicant can apply for one or more of the available funding opportunities.

30. The deadline for applying for the RFP is June 14. Will districts be notified in time to build the program and hire staff for an August start date?

ISBE has 90 days to finalize awards.

31. Is "eligible" defined as those who are at 200% of the Federal Poverty Level and below?

A priority eligible child for the FY 2024 ECBG is a child whose parents or caregivers are at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level. Additionally, grantees have an established weighted eligibility criteria and prioritize children who are most at risk of academic failure to determine eligibility. Grantees must include the following priority populations on the weighted eligibility checklist as they prioritize for enrollment: children with Individualized Education Programs; children experiencing homelessness; youth in care; children with family income that is 50% below the Federal Poverty Level; children whose parent or caregiver speaks a language other than English; and children whose screening indicated delays in development, but do not have a current referral to special education.

32. Are Head Start slots considered part of the 80% calculation?

Yes.

33. If an applicant that has a Preschool for All program within the city of Chicago wants to expand to the suburbs, are they eligible to apply?

Yes, as long as children are served outside the City of Chicago.

34. Can an entity apply for a Preschool for All program for a new site that they plan to open even though it is not currently operational?

Non-school district applicants must be operating at the time grant funds are awarded. If the Preschool for All 3-5 program is operated in or by a facility subject to licensure requirements of the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), then that facility must hold the appropriate licensure in accordance with rules promulgated by DCFS. (See 89 Illinois Administrative Code, Chapter III: Department of Children and Family Services, Subchapter e: Requirements for Licensure.)

35. If an entity has current preschool slots funded by district funds, can it apply to move these slots to the Preschool for All grant.

Any eligible applicant can apply for slots that are not currently funded by an Early Childhood Block Grant.

36. Can a community-based organization partner with one local district to apply for Preschool for All Expansion and another local district to apply for Preschool for All?

Yes, as long as they are separate grant programs.

37. In the proposal for new slots, can funds for capital improvements associated with providing services be requested?

The following are non-allowable expenses within Early Childhood Block Grants: expenses related to graduation/promotion; itinerant services provided by special education staff (these expenditures should be covered by special education funds); compensation for principal, assistant principal, superintendent, directors of child care centers, etc. (must use as indirect cost); vehicle purchase; building purchase or any other permanent structure (rent may be allowable, if there is a need for space that is not already owned by district/fiscal agent); staff tuition reimbursement; capital construction; renovation; modernization; or other facilities-related activities.

38. Will all applicants scoring over 60 points be awarded?

Proposals scoring over 60 points will be awarded in the following order:
a. Applicants that demonstrate a seat gap of 100% and no available programming will be awarded first.
b. Next, those applicants with a seat gap of 100% and evidence of some local programming will be awarded.
c. Finally, all other awardable applications will be served.

39. Is PFA prioritized over PFAE?

ISBE is anticipating awarding 5,000 PFA slots. However, we will make PFAE awards as well.

40. Is there a targeted dollar amount per slot that programs should request?

Applicants should request the amount they need to run the program.

41. If an entity is not on the Priority List, should it apply?

The Priority List of preschool deserts will be used for priority points and to demonstrate need; however, any eligible applicant may apply.

42. If an applicant has PFA, but not PI, will they receive the priority points given to applicants that do not currently have ECBG funding?

No, only entities that do not have any of the ECBG grants would receive the priority points.

43. If an eligible applicant other than a community-based organization submits an application and includes a community based organization as a site will they receive the priority points?

No, only those community-based organizations who apply as the grantee will receive the priority points.

44. How does an applicant determine the number of slots needed in an area identified as a desert?

Please refer to the map of preschool deserts. ECBG Preschool Deserts (isbe.net)