

Smart Start

Early Childhood Block Grant

**FY 2025 Notice of Funding Opportunity/Request
for Proposal - Technical Assistance Webinar**

Carisa Hurley Davis, Early Childhood Director

Norma Moore, Early Childhood Supervisor

Alicia Lynch-Deatherage, Early Childhood Supervisor

Jenny Metcalf and Penny Smith, Early Childhood Principal Consultants

Overview

- Current Grantees
- Entities That Are Eligible to Apply
- Entities That Are Ineligible to Apply
- Funding Opportunities
- Joint Applications
- GATA
- Funding Information
- Funding Priorities
- Grant Period
- IWAS Access -Application Submission
- Program Narrative
- Compliance Checklists
- Review Criteria
- Budget
- Submission Deadline
- Conclusion

Current Grantees

- Currently funded fiscal year 2019, FY 2020, FY 2023, and FY 2024 cohorts do not have to complete this application **to maintain current funding.**
- Entities may apply for additional slots under this application – do not include current slots or funding in the new application.

Entities That Are Eligible to Apply

- Regional Offices of Education
- Public school districts
- University laboratory schools approved by the Illinois State Board of Education
- Charter schools
- Area vocational centers
- 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
- Entities previously not funded
 - Non-school district applicants must be operating at the time grant funds are awarded.

Entities That Are Ineligible to Apply

- Entities within the city of Chicago
- Entities that are barred from receiving state or federal funds as a result of being on the Stop Payment list

Funding Opportunities

Entities may apply for one or all funding opportunities:

- **Preschool for All (PFA)** provides at least 12.5 hours weekly of high-quality preschool 165 days per year.
- **Preschool for All Expansion (PFAE)** provides high-quality preschool programs that include a full school day of instruction 165 days per year and comprehensive services in the areas of medical, dental and mental health.
- **Prevention Initiative (PI)** provides at least 12.5 hours weekly of quality center-based educational services 165 days per year. This may be in child care center licensed by the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) or DCFS-licensed family child care program. Programs that intend to implement evidence-based home visiting or doula services are not eligible to apply.

Funding Information

- Total amount of funding available 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 PFA and PFAE slots awarded based on the number of slots the community needs to serve at least 80% of eligible children.
- ISBE reserves the right to determine the number of PI slots awarded based on the number of slots the community needs.
- Applicants may not be awarded for the full number of slots requested.

Funding timeline

- Funding under this NOFO/RFP is to provide services within the FY 2025 program year by January 2025.
- Applicants that are not able to fully implement the PFA program during the FY 2025 program year will be granted additional time for program start-up.
- The program is expected to be fully implemented and serving children in FY 2026.

Grant Period

- The competitive grants are to implement programs in FY 2025 and FY 2026.
- The grant period will begin no sooner than July 1, 2024, and will extend from the execution date of the grant until June 30, 2025.
- Funding in subsequent year will be contingent upon a sufficient appropriation for the program and satisfactory progress in the preceding grant period.

Review Criteria

- Proposals that score under 60 points will not be funded.
- Selection criteria:
 - Section 1: Population to be Served (30 Points)
 - Section 2: Quality of Proposed Program (40 Points)
 - Section 3: Experience and Qualifications (20 Points)
 - Section 4: Cost Effectiveness (10 points)
 - Section 5: Priority Consideration (55 Points)
- Each criteria is worth up to 5 points.
- The attachment and question number in the parentheses following the criteria indicates where in the Program Narrative the evaluator will look to determine if the criteria has been met.

PFA/PFAE Priority Points

- 10 points - Applicant is offering to provide services in desert area.
- 10 points - Applicants that don't currently receive any Early Childhood Block Grant (ECBG) funding.
- 10 points – Eligible applicants that are applying in a subcontracted effort with DCFS-licensed child care centers or family child cares.
- 10 points - Prior or current Smart Start Child Care Grant recipient through the Illinois Department of Human Services.

PI Priority Points

- 10 points – Current Preschool for All and/or Preschool For All Expansion grantee proposing to provide Prevention Initiative services in the same location.
- 10 points - Applicants that don't currently receive any ECBG funding.
- 10 points – Eligible applicants that are applying in a subcontracted effort with DCFS-licensed family child care, as specified on the Site Information pages.
- 10 points - Prior or current Smart Start Child Care Grant recipient through the Illinois Department of Human Services.

Data on PFA/PFAE Deserts

Identification

The following data sets were used in Identifying the deserts :

- 2023 Illinois Early Childhood Asset Map data (i.e., number of Head Start and ECBG programs by county – excluding Chicago)
- 2021 Census data (i.e., data on poverty levels, number of children living in poverty)
- 2024 ECBG data (i.e., newly awarded programs, continuation programs, estimated number of children served, actual number of children served)

A list of the priority communities (deserts) is linked in the FY 2025 NOFO/RFP.

FY 2025 NOFO/RFP Funding Priority

Preschool deserts are areas of the state in need of 15 or more slots to serve at least 80% of low-income 3- and 4-year-olds.

- 189 district regions are identified as preschool deserts.
- 96/189 district regions have no publicly funded preschool slots.

Priority List Instructions

What does the Priority List show?

The Priority List identifies the district regions that are “early childhood deserts.” An early childhood desert is an area of the state where there is an insufficient number of publicly funded slots to serve at least 80% of 3- and 4-year-old children from low-income families. Twenty children per classroom is the maximum class size for a Preschool for All/Preschool for All Expansion program. Fifteen children per classroom is being accepted as the minimum in communities where there are not enough children to fill 20 seats in a classroom so that ISBE can more effectively address the issue of early childhood deserts. The 15 children per classroom threshold aligns with the minimum class size for an inclusive classroom serving children with special needs.

What is the purpose of the Priority List?

The purpose of the Priority List is to assist potential applicants in determining if they are located in a district region that is identified as an early childhood desert.

Priority List Instructions

How might an applicant use information from the Priority List in the response to Request 1?

In describing “... the area to be served indicated by high levels of poverty that has an insufficient number of other programs and services to fully serve all children and families who potentially could be at risk,” the applicant may wish to identify the district region(s) that constitute the area served by the applicant. Information on how the program participants does or will “feed” into programs – both community-based organizations and districts – is helpful in making a strong case of how the applicant will serve eligible children.

How might an applicant use information from the Priority List in the response to Request 2?

The applicant may wish to use local information (i.e., data that the applicant possesses to make a case for need) and information in the Priority List (i.e., how information in the Priority List supports the local information) to indicate “...the number of slots needed to serve at least 80% of eligible children in the community ...”

PFA/PFAE Order of Awards

Proposals scoring over 60 points will be awarded in the following order:

- Applicants proposing to provide services in early childhood deserts where there are insufficient slots to serve at least 80% of eligible children.
- Prior or current recipients of the Smart Start Child Care Grants through the Illinois Department of Human Services.
- Finally, all other awardable applications will receive grants.

PI Order of Awards

Proposals scoring over 60 points will be awarded in the following order:

- Current Preschool for All and/or Preschool for All Expansion grantee proposing to provide Prevention Initiative Services in the same location.
- Prior or current recipients of the Smart Start Child Care Grants through the Illinois Department of Human Services.
- Finally, all other awardable applications will receive grants.

Grant Award Notice

- It is anticipated that successful applicants will receive a Notice of Award via email approximately 90 days after the application deadline.
- The award letter is NOT an authorization to begin performance or expenditures.
- After the merit-based appeal timeframe has ended, awardees will receive additional information from the program area that includes the next steps for finalizing the grant.

Grant Accountability and Transparency Act

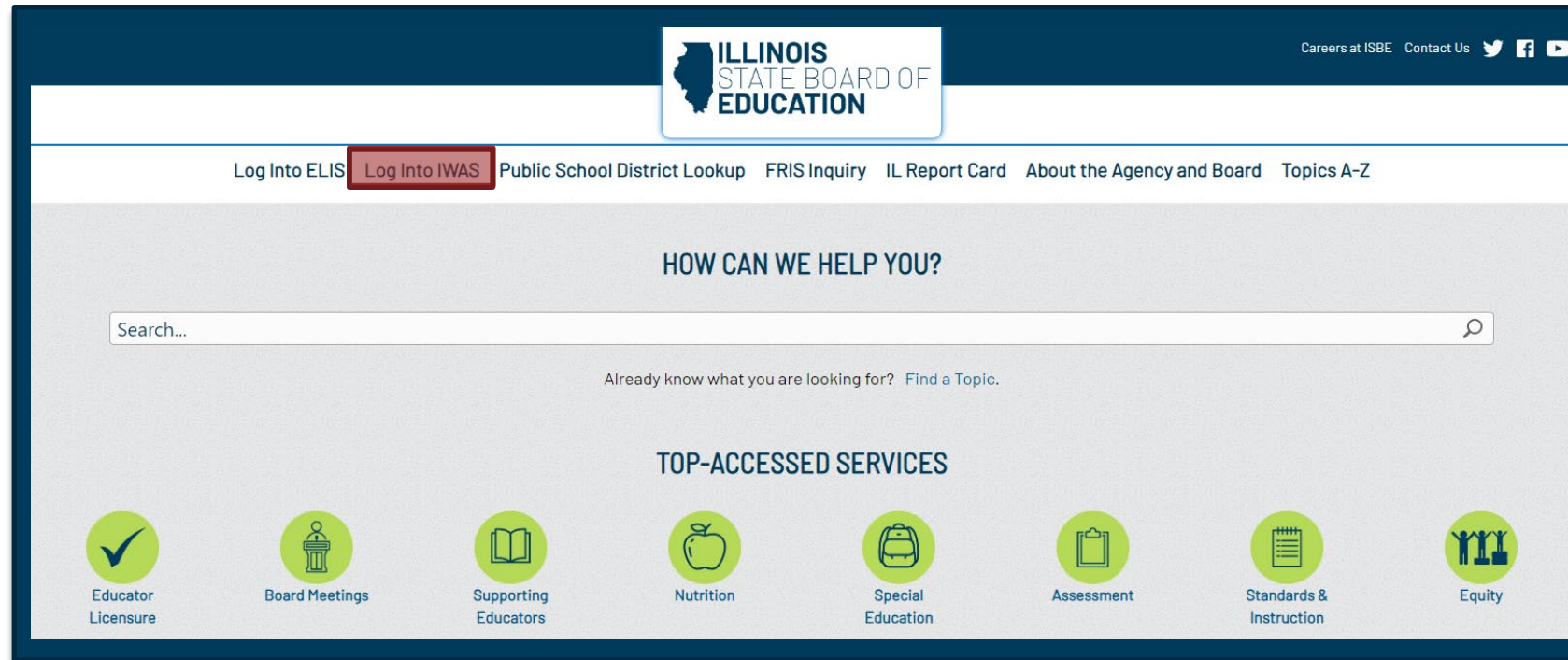
- The Grant Accountability and Transparency Act (GATA) requires applicants to complete prequalification requirements before applying for any grant.
- This includes completion of the grantee registration and prequalification process through the [Illinois GATA Web Portal](#).
- Grant applications must be submitted by the application deadline indicated in this NOFO/RFP.
- Applicants are advised to complete the prequalification requirements well in advance of the NOFO/RFP deadline.

Joint Applications

- Joint applications for funds may be submitted by any combination of eligible applicants.
 - An administrative agent shall be designated.
 - A school district or other eligible applicant shall only participate in one proposal for a specific program.
- DCFS-licensed family child care are eligible to apply in joint applications with an administrative agent from a Local Education Agency or another eligible applicant.

IWAS Sign In

Select “Log into IWAS” from menu on www.isbe.net.



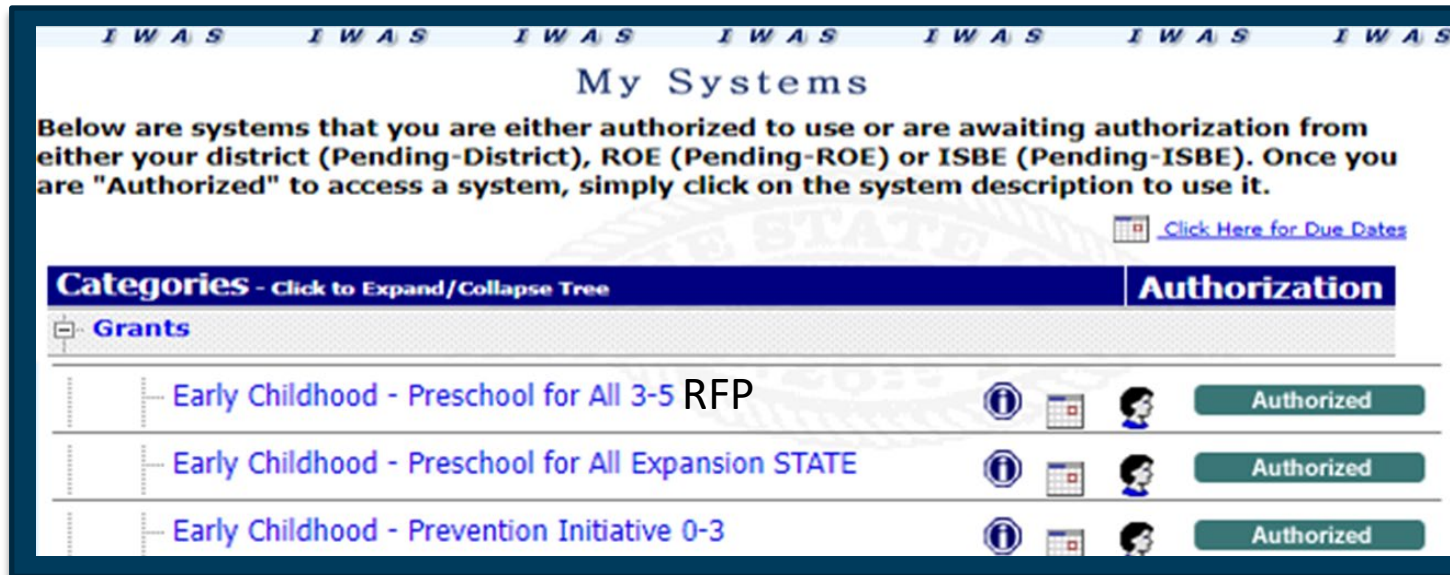
IWAS Access

Home	<p>Hello Audrey, you last logged in 3/1/2024 11:36:21 AM.</p> <p>Messages :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">0 unread Inbox message(s)0 unread Archived message(s) <p>Require Action :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">0 Sign-ups pending your approval0 Documents pending your approval0 Feedback messages pending review
System Listing	
Pending Sign Ups	
Pending Documents	
Change Password	
Messages - Inbox	
Messages - Archived	News Items
Search	<p>SIS Maintenance This Weekend</p> <p>ISBE will be performing maintenance on the Student Information System (SIS) starting at 5:00 pm Friday, March 1st until 8:00 am Monday, March 4th, 2024. SIS will be unavailable to all users during this time.</p>
Help	
Log Out	<p>Nonpublic Registration and Recognition in Maintenance!</p> <p>Both the Nonpublic Registration and Recognition Renewal Systems are currently in Maintenance. This message will be removed when the process is complete. Thank you!</p>
IWAS Training Video	

IWAS Access - Authorized Status

Select "Signup for Other Systems/Active Grants" to add those systems that are needed.

- Early Childhood - Preschool for All RFP
- Early Childhood - Preschool for All Expansion State RFP
- Early Childhood - Prevention Initiative RFP

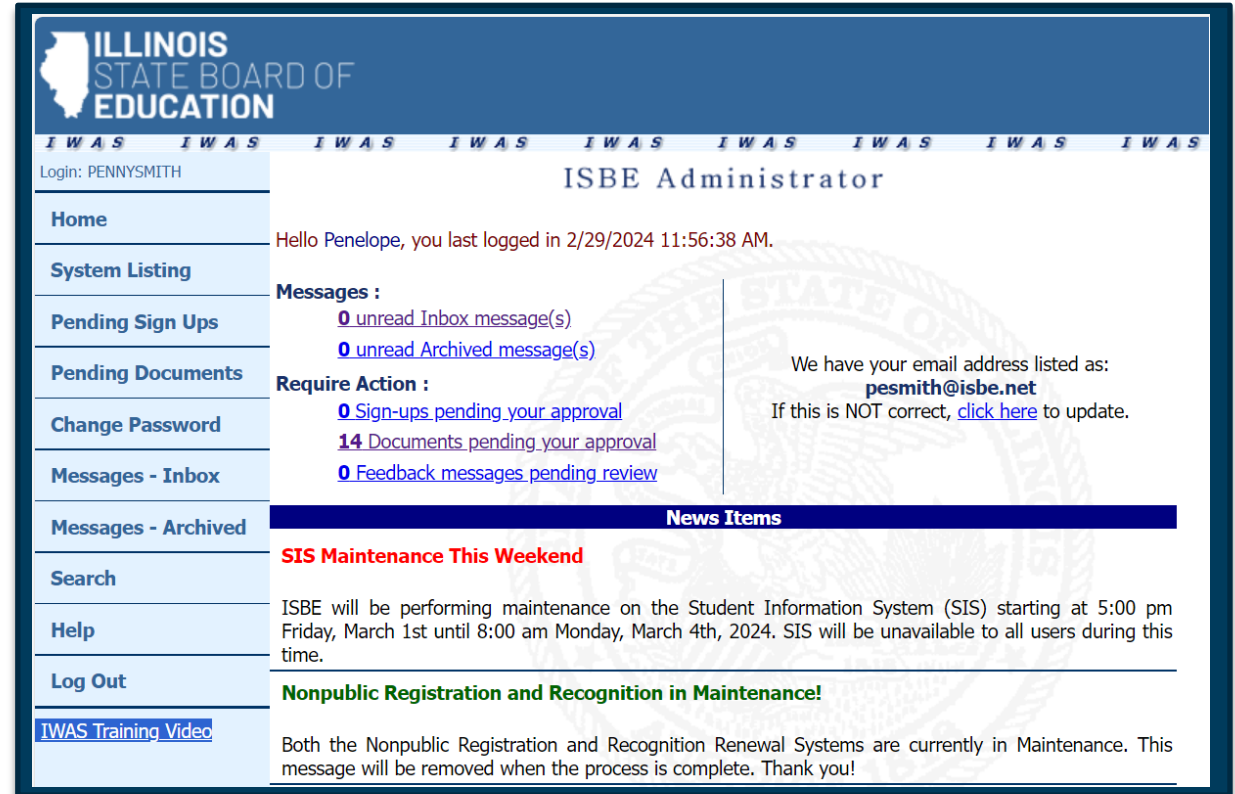


The screenshot shows the "My Systems" page in the IWAS system. At the top, there is a header with the text "IWAS IWAS IWAS IWAS IWAS IWAS IWAS". Below this, the title "My Systems" is displayed. A paragraph explains that the systems listed are either authorized for use or pending authorization from the district, ROE, or ISBE. A link "Click Here for Due Dates" is provided. The page is divided into two main sections: "Categories - Click to Expand/Collapse Tree" and "Authorization". Under "Categories", the "Grants" section is expanded, showing three items:

System Description	Information Icon	Calendar Icon	User Icon	Authorization Status
Early Childhood - Preschool for All 3-5 RFP				Authorized
Early Childhood - Preschool for All Expansion STATE				Authorized
Early Childhood - Prevention Initiative 0-3				Authorized

IWAS Technical Assistance

If you need assistance, reference the [IWAS User Guide](#), review [the IWAS Training Video](#), or contact the ISBE Help Desk at **217-558-3600**.



ILLINOIS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

ISBE Administrator

Login: PENNYSMITH

Hello Penelope, you last logged in 2/29/2024 11:56:38 AM.

Messages :

- 0 unread Inbox message(s)
- 0 unread Archived message(s)

Require Action :

- 0 Sign-ups pending your approval
- 14 Documents pending your approval
- 0 Feedback messages pending review

We have your email address listed as: **pesmith@isbe.net**
If this is NOT correct, [click here](#) to update.

News Items

SIS Maintenance This Weekend

ISBE will be performing maintenance on the Student Information System (SIS) starting at 5:00 pm Friday, March 1st until 8:00 am Monday, March 4th, 2024. SIS will be unavailable to all users during this time.

Nonpublic Registration and Recognition in Maintenance!

Both the Nonpublic Registration and Recognition Renewal Systems are currently in Maintenance. This message will be removed when the process is complete. Thank you!

[IWAS Training Video](#)

Creating Application

- Select the box that shows the current year.
- Select Create Application.
- Application will appear on screen.

Application Tabs

- Please click on each tab to read important information.
- All tabs under General Information are read only.
- Tabs starting with Applicant Pages must be completed.
- Save each page that requires information to be entered.

Overview	General Information	Applicant Pages	Program Information	Site Information Pages	Amendments	Program Narrative	Budget Pages	Assurance Pages	Submit	Application History	Page Lock Control	Application Print
Program Purpose	Program Description	Background	Program Objectives	Policy Requirements	Funding Information	Review Criteria						

Applicant Information

- Select Regular Project Year if services will end prior to June 30.
- Select Extended Project Year if services will occur in July/August.

Activity Period:*

- ☐ Regular Project Year - Activities completed through June 30. No new obligations/activities after June 30 except to pay outstanding obligations made prior to June 30 or to pay for salaries for activities completed prior to June 30 (salaries paid on a 12-month basis, but working only nine months).
- ☐ Extended Project Year - Activities occurring between project begin date and August 31. Possible new activities AFTER June 30 could be summer staff development activities and/or audit services.

Grant Period:*

Begin Date: The grant period will begin no sooner than July 1, 2024, and will extend from the execution date of the grant until June 30, 2025.

End Date:

Joint Agreement

- Select whether this application is being submitted as a joint agreement.
- **Only school districts** entering a joint agreement with other school districts should mark yes.
- If yes, indicate partnering districts.
- Entities that are in joint applications with DCFS-licensed child care centers or family child care will mark no and enter that information on the site tab.

Joint Agreement

☐ Yes ☐ No Is this application submitted as a joint agreement?* If yes, complete this page. If no, save page and continue to the next page.

Program Information

- Indicate the number of children to be served and the requested funding amount.
- Only include new slots and funding to support those slots.
- Answer all questions in relation to new slots being requested.

Proposed Preschool For All Program Information	
<input type="text"/>	Number of children requested to be served in this Preschool for All application (include children with IEPs)
<input type="text"/>	Number of children served in local Head Start (IECAM Data)
<input type="text"/>	Dollar amount requested in this application
<input type="text"/>	Cost per child requested in this application (Dollar amount of proposal divided by Number of children served.)
<input type="text"/>	Number of teaching staff with PEL and Early Childhood Endorsement
<input type="text"/>	Number of paraprofessionals
<input type="text"/>	Number of instructional leaders
<input type="text"/>	Number of family educators
<input type="text"/>	Number of clerical staff
	Other: <input type="text"/>
	Other: <input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	Total number of staff

Site Information Pages

Site Information 1-10	Site Information 11-20
Site Information - Sites 1-10	
Enter below the information requested for all proposed sites. ALL applicants must complete this section for all proposed sites. See the FY 2025 ECBG Priority list linked in the NOFO/RFP to complete this page.	
Name of Site <input type="text"/>	<div>Region-County-District-Type-Site Code <input type="text"/></div>
Street Address <input type="text"/>	Township <input type="text"/>
City <input type="text"/>	County <input type="text"/>
Is the proposed site located in an early childhood desert? <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	Zip Code+4 <input type="text"/>
Attendance Days Per Year: <input type="text"/>	
Attendance Per Days of the Week (Check all that apply.): <input type="checkbox"/> Monday <input type="checkbox"/> Tuesday <input type="checkbox"/> Wednesday <input type="checkbox"/> Thursday <input type="checkbox"/> Friday	
Program Hours Per Day: <input type="text"/>	

Amendments

- All applicants will indicate Original Application.

Is this an Original application or Amended application?*



Original Application



Amended Application

Grant Changes

Compliance Checklist

- Specific requirements for implementing each grant can be found within the Grant Compliance Checklist.
 - Preschool for All/Preschool for All Expansion
 - PFA items 1-20; PFAE items 1-37
 - Prevention Initiative
 - PI center-based items PI1 – PI10 and CB1 – CB8
- Programs should refer to these requirements when responding to the Program Narrative questions

Program Narrative

- The Program Narrative has five parts.
- Each part has several questions to be answered.

Program Narrative Part 1	Program Narrative Part 2	Program Narrative Part 3	Program Narrative Part 4	Program Narrative Part 5
--	--	--	--	--

Required Uploads

- Non-school district applicants must upload a copy of a valid DCFS day care license before saving this page.
- Please do not upload any other items.

Indirect Cost Calculation

- Indirect cost rates will be loaded after grants are awarded.
- If your organization plans to use indirect costs, please put an indirect cost placeholder on the Budget Detail page.

D. Indirect Cost Calculation

1. The type of rate for this entity's calculation of indirect costs is prepopulated below and cannot be changed.

2. Enter the amount of indirect costs to be claimed here. Enter 0 if 0% is displayed in #1 above.

- The amount on this page should be indicated as 0.

Budget Detail

- The budget for current grantees that are requesting additional seats should refer to **only the new slots** being requested.
- Itemize and explain each projected expense.
- The instructions link on this tab will give you an idea of what function and object codes are needed.
- The total amount entered will show up as a negative balance.

Function Code	Object Code	Exclude from MTDC**	Expenditure Description and Itemization	PFA-RFP Funds	Delete Row
<input type="text" value="v"/>	<input type="text" value="v"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="text" value="0"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="text" value="v"/>	<input type="text" value="v"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="text" value="0"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="text" value="v"/>	<input type="text" value="v"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="text" value="0"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Budget

- This tab is prepopulated based on what is inputted on the budget detail page.
- Budget chart is read only.
- The function and object codes in black cannot be used on the Budget Detail page.

Budget (Read Only)									
LINE	FUNCTION	EXPENDITURE ACCOUNTING	SALARIES 100	EMPLOYEE BENEFITS 200	PURCHASED SERVICES 300	SUPPLIES & MATERIALS 400	CAPITAL OUTLAY** 500	OTHER OBJECTS 600	NONCAP EQUIP** 700
1	1000	Instruction							
4	2130	Health Services							
7	2210	Improvement of Instruction Services							
10	2300	General Administration							
15	2540	Operation & Maintenance of Plant Services							
16	2550	Pupil Transportation Services							
17	2560	Food Services							
25	3000	Community Services							
27	4000	Payments to Other Districts and Governmental Units							
28	5000	Debt Services							
29	Total Direct Costs								

Local Match

- On this tab, please indicate if your program uses other federal/state funds, local funds, contributions from foundations or private donors, or in-kind donations of goods or services that will supplement this grant.

Payment Schedule

- The total amount being requested on the Budget Detail tab must match the payment schedule.
- Total amount should be evenly disbursed each month based on the projected start date of expenditures.

An authorized user must save this page prior to Application Submission.

Month	Payment Amount
July	<input type="text" value="0"/>
August	<input type="text" value="0"/>
September	<input type="text" value="0"/>
October	<input type="text" value="0"/>
November	<input type="text" value="0"/>
December	<input type="text" value="0"/>
January	<input type="text" value="0"/>
February	<input type="text" value="0"/>
March	<input type="text" value="0"/>
April	<input type="text" value="0"/>
May	<input type="text" value="0"/>
June	<input type="text" value="0"/>
Total \$	<input type="text" value="0"/>

Budget Detail Total	<input type="text" value="0"/>
Amount Remaining	<input type="text" value="0"/>

Assurance Pages

- Please make sure all boxes have been checked on the Program Assurances and Assurances tabs.



Submitting Application

- Select Submit tab.
- Select Consistency Check.
- Any error messages that display will need to be corrected and the Consistency Check must be run again.

Assurances must be reviewed and approved by your Local IWAS Administrator before you can submit your application.

Consistency Check

Lock Application

Unlock Application

Submitting Application

- The authorized official can submit the application directly to ISBE.
- If anyone else submits the application, it will need final approval from the authorized official before it can be submitted.

Technical Assistance: Birth to Five Regional Team

- Share NOFO/RFP application information, Training and Technical Assistance dates, and any other relevant news via all 39 regional social media outlets and newsletters.
- Target outreach in preschool deserts to share the information, encourage providers to apply, and offer to support accessing data and other required materials.
- Convene stakeholders to discuss Smart Start ECBG needs in the region and identify possible applicants.
- Organize community meetings (co-hosted with community partners and council members) on the need for Smart Start ECBG (including how to apply).
- Connect applicants (especially CBOs) to grant-writing support where possible (including sharing past ECBG NOFO/RFPs as examples).

In Conclusion

- **Proposals must be received no later than 4 p.m. on May 16, 2024.**
- Make sure you are applying for the intended funding opportunity.
- Read through the NOFO/RFP in its entirety.
- Include all grant requirements -- be thorough.
- Provide only what is listed in the NOFO/RFP.
- Use ISBE links and resources for questions and more information.
- All NOFO/RFP-related information can be found on the ISBE Early Childhood webpage.
- Contact the Early Childhood Development Department with questions at ecrfp@isbe.net or 217-524-4835.