

**Preparing for the Early Childhood Block Grant (ECBG) Re-Competition:
Apply to receive individualized Technical Assistance (TA) and Support during application process**

The new year is here, and with it comes new opportunities. ISBE expects to release the re-designed RFPs to apply for FY18 ECBG funding in January 2017, with a bidders' conference to follow shortly afterward. Communities will have 60 days to submit their proposals.

The FY18 ECBG funding will focus on five policy priorities:

- Prioritizing high need communities
- Serving children from priority populations – homelessness, 50% federal poverty level and below, children with special needs (IEP/IFSP), and current or recent child welfare involvement;
- Increasing number of slots that meet the Preschool Expansion model – full-day and comprehensive services;
- Encouraging/supporting community collaborations; and
- Building a birth to 3rd grade continuum of high quality services

Thus, the grant will emphasize providing high quality early childhood services to children and families with the highest needs, from pre-natal through age 5, so they have the best chance for success in school and life. To ensure that your community is able to prepare a competitive application for funding, it is important to set some dates **now** for community-based and school-based early childhood providers to begin planning **together** for this funding opportunity. Don't forget to include your Early Childhood Collaborations, Regional Offices of Education, TA providers from ISBE, StarNET, Early Choices, and the CCR&Rs, as well as community partners that support and contribute to child and family well-being, including physical and mental health services, housing providers, and homeless shelters.

Please check the [ISBE early childhood webpage](#) frequently for updates. Data will be provided through the Illinois Early Childhood Asset Map (IECAM) webpage and will include kindergarten demographic data focused on the priority populations, maps of current Preschool for All and Prevention Initiative and Head Start slots, as well as community risk profiles. ISBE has begun posting webinars, resources, and links to help support communities and programs in the process of proposal writing; additional materials will be added in the coming weeks. Some of these materials were developed through work groups of the Early Learning Council's Integration and Alignment Committee.

Many communities with high needs are still building their capacity to respond to funding opportunities like the ECBG. Through the generosity of the private philanthropy community, communities may apply to receive individualized and regional technical assistance and support with the application process. TA might include support with analyzing risk and reach data; designing programs and budgeting to deliver comprehensive services; engaging in collaborative planning; coordinated enrollment; and building a birth-to eight pipeline for children and families. Communities interested in receiving technical assistance should first complete the short survey found at: [ECBG TA Survey](#). Additional questions can be emailed to ECBGTA@gmail.com.