



# Illinois State Board of Education

**Dr. Tony Sanders**, State Superintendent of Education  
**Dr. Steven Isoye**, Chair of the Board

100 N. First Street • Springfield, IL 62777 • [isbe.net](http://isbe.net)

April 17, 2023

**TO:** Eligible Applicants

**FROM:** Tony Sanders  
State Superintendent of Education

**SUBJECT:** **NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY (NOFO) / REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP):**  
Fiscal Year 2024 Preschool for All Expansion 3-5 Years

**CSFA Number:** 586-44-2222

**CSFA Title:** Early Childhood Block Grant - Early Childhood - Preschool for All Expansion STATE

## Program Overview

### *Eligibility and Application Information*

**Eligible Applicants:** Currently funded and new Early Childhood Block Grant (ECBG) Preschool for All 3-5 Expansion programs from Regional Offices of Education (ROEs); public school districts; university laboratory schools approved by the Illinois State Board of Education (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 Expansion (PFAE) program for 3- to 5-year-olds.

The number of programs awarded will be determined by the number of applications received and the amount of funds available to award to programs. **ISBE reserves the right to determine the number of slots awarded based on funded seats to serve at least 80% of 3- and 4-year-old eligible children. As a result, applicants may not be awarded for the full number of slots requested.** ([FY 24 ECBG priority list](#))

**ECBG programs that were funded in FY 2019, FY 2020, and FY 2023 are not to complete this application to maintain current funding unless the entity wishes to apply for additional slots to expand their program under this application.**

Entities that are barred from receiving state or federal funds as a result of being on the Stop Payment list are ineligible to apply for funds under this NOFO/RFP.

Non-school district applicants must be operating at the time grant funds are awarded. If the Preschool for All Expansion 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.](#))

Joint applications for funds may be submitted by any combination of eligible applicants, as described in 235.10 (b) of the [Early Childhood Block Grant Administrative Rules, Part 235, Subpart A.](#)

- 1) If a joint application is submitted, then an administrative agent shall be designated.
- 2) A school district or other eligible applicant shall only participate in one proposal for a specific program.

The joint proposal must have the signature of each district superintendent or official authorized to submit the proposal and agree to participate in the joint agreement. **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.** A school district or other eligible applicant can participate in only one proposal for a Preschool for All Expansion initiative.

Eligible applicants may subcontract with a private school, not-for-profit or for-profit corporation, or other governmental agency that would otherwise be eligible under subsection (b) of Section 235.10 to conduct an ECBG program.

A separate appropriation has been awarded to the City of Chicago School District 299 for the initiatives funded under the ECBG Preschool for All Expansion program. Applicants proposing to provide services for children and families within the Chicago city limits must apply for funds through the Chicago Public Schools [Office of Early Childhood Education](#).

Programs seeking funding through ISBE must serve children and families outside the city of Chicago. **ISBE does not fund entities in the city of Chicago.**

Funding under this NOFO/RFP is to provide services within the FY 2024 program year by January 2024. Once awards are finalized, applicants who are not able to fully implement the PFAE program during the FY 2024 program year will be granted additional time for program start-up with the expectation that the program will be fully implemented and serving children in FY 2025. Grantees will work with their assigned principal consultant to develop their start-up budget utilizing FY 2024 funding and participate in monthly check-in sessions to track start-up implementation.

**NOTE:** The State of Illinois 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

Successful grant applicants will be required to complete an FY 2024 Fiscal and Administrative Risk Assessment in the form of an Internal Controls Questionnaire (ICQ) available through the GATA Web Portal, an FY 2024 Organizational Risk Assessment through the ISBE Web Application Security (IWAS) system, and the FY 2024 Programmatic Risk Assessment that is found within the electronic Grant Management System budget. Grant awards will not be executed until the FY 2024 ICQ, Organizational Risk Assessment, and Programmatic Risk Assessment are completed.

**System for Award Management (SAM):** Each applicant (unless the applicant is an individual or federal or state awarding agency that is exempt from those requirements under 2 CFR § 25.110(b) or (c), or has an exception approved by the federal or state awarding agency under 2 CFR § 25.110(d)) is required to:

- (i) Be registered in [SAM](#) before submitting its application;
- (ii) Continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active state award or an application or plan under consideration by a federal or state awarding agency. ISBE may not consider an application for a state award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable SAM requirements.

[Code of Federal Regulations / Title 2 - Grants and Agreements / Vol. 1 / 2014-01-01192](#)

**This grant is subject to the provisions of:**

- [Grant Accountability and Transparency Act \(GATA\), 30 ILCS 708/1 et seq.](#)
- [Administrative Rules for GATA, 44 Ill. Admin. Code Part 7000](#)

**Merit-Based Review and Selection Process for Competitive Grants:** ISBE is required to design and execute a merit-based review and selection process for applications. This process is incorporated by reference in all applicable funding opportunities. Applicants are advised to refer to the [ISBE Merit-Based Review Policy](#).

**Grant Award:** Total amount of funding available for Preschool for All Expansion 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.**

As per the Illinois Administrative Code **Section 235.70 (c) Terms of the Grant:** Grantees shall use funds provided under the Early Childhood Block Grant *to supplement, not supplant, funds received from any other source.* (See Sections 2-3.71 and 2-3.89 of the School Code.) As a result, the applicant must disclose other funds that will be used to service children in the Preschool for All Expansion program.

Awards will be determined in the following manner:

1. Each proposal will be scored by the criteria identified in 235.50 (a) (1-4):
  - a. Population proposed to be served – 30 points
  - b. Quality of proposed program – 40 points
  - c. Experience and qualifications – 20 points
  - d. Cost-effectiveness - 10 points
2. Priority points (235.50 (b)(c)):
  - a. Applications with an identified 100% gap between seats and priority eligible seats will receive 20 points.
  - b. Applications with no early childhood programming in place will receive 25 points.
  - c. Community-based organizations will receive 10 points.
3. 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. Applicants with a seat gap of 100% and evidence of some local programming will be awarded next.
  - c. Finally, all other awardable applications will receive grants.

Additional Funding Information is on page 7

The number of programs awarded that score 60 or above will be determined by the amount of funds available. As a result, all programs that score over 60 may not receive funding. ISBE reserves the right to determine the number of slots awarded based on the number of funded seats to serve at least 80% of 3- and 4-year-old eligible children. As a result, applicants may not be awarded for the full number of slots requested.

The state superintendent of education shall determine the amount of individual grant awards. The final award amounts shall be based upon:

- 1) The total amount of funds available for the Early Childhood Block Grant; and
- 2) The resources requested in the top-ranked proposals, as identified pursuant to [Part 235.50 \(b\) through \(d\)](#).

In particular, the selection of proposals for funding is based in part on geographic distribution and/or the need to provide resources to school districts and communities with varying demographic characteristics and priority consideration given awardable applications in early childhood deserts as identified in the [list linked here](#).

**Cost Sharing or Matching:** Cost sharing or matching is not required for the purposes of this grant.

**Grant Period:** The grant period will begin no sooner than July 1, 2023, and will extend from the execution date of the grant until June 30, 2024. Successful applicants may reapply via continuing application for up to one additional year. Funding in the subsequent year will be contingent upon compliance with federal and state law, state grant-making rules, passage of sufficient appropriations for the program, and satisfactory performance in the preceding grant period. No promise or undertaking made in this NOFO/RFP is an assurance that a grant agreement will be renewed, nor does this NOFO/RFP create any right to or expectation of renewal. (235.60 [Early Childhood Block Grant Rules, Subpart A](#))

**Submission Dates and Times/Other Submission Requirements:** Proposals can be submitted electronically through the ISBE Attachment Manager or emailed no later than 4 p.m. June 14, 2023. Directions for each submission method are found below.

**Electronic Submission:** Completed proposals sent electronically should be scanned into PDF with all supporting documents and required signatures and submitted via the [ISBE Attachment Manager](#). Choose “FY24 Early Childhood RFP” from the dropdown menu in Receiver Information. Submit the application using the “Submit” button at the bottom of the page.

**Email:** The proposal may be emailed to [earlychi@isbe.net](mailto:earlychi@isbe.net).

Late proposals will not be accepted. Proposals received at or after 4:01 p.m. on June 14 will be considered late.

**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. Monies spent prior to programmatic approval are done so at the applicant’s own risk.

**Technical Assistance Session:** Technical assistance sessions will be held at 10 a.m. on Thursday, April 27; Monday, May 8 (**targeted audience – community-based organizations**); and Tuesday, May 23. [See registration information](#). Attendance is not required. This webinar will provide an overview of the FY 2024 NOFO/RFP application process for Prevention Initiative, Preschool for All, and Preschool for All Expansion.

The [Birth to Five Illinois](#) Regional Team is available throughout the application window to assist applicants with accessing and understanding data, connecting applicants to grant-writing support where possible and assisting community-based providers, such as family child care homes, with identifying opportunities for collaboration and partners to apply for funding.

Please refer to the PFAE RFP example linked [here](#).

**Changes to NOFO/RFP:** ISBE will post any changes made to the NOFO/RFP prior to June 7, 2023, on the ISBE [Funding Opportunities webpage](#). Applicants are advised to check the site before submitting a proposal.

**Agency Contact/Contact to Request Application Package:** For more information on this NOFO/RFP, contact the Early Childhood Department at 217-524-4835 or [earlychi@isbe.net](mailto:earlychi@isbe.net).

## General Information

### *Program Background and Description*

#### **Program Purpose:**

The purpose of this program is to provide funds for early childhood and family education programs and services that will help young children enter school ready to learn. ECBG funds the Preventions Initiative, Preschool for All, and Preschool for All Expansion programs.

The PFAE program supports Illinois students entering school with a foundation of knowledge and skills that enables them to be prepared for kindergarten and to receive the necessary supports to be reading at or above grade level by third grade.

**Program Description:**

Funds from the [Preschool for All Expansion](#) Grant are used to implement and sustain high-quality preschool programs that reach and serve 3- to 5-year-old children in high-need communities and include a full school day of instruction and comprehensive services in the areas of medical, dental, and mental health. This includes targeted supports pertaining to family engagement; instructional practices; and positive behavioral and social-emotional development, including a family educator, instructional leader, and mental health consultation. Specific requirements of implementing the Preschool for All Expansion Grant can be found within the [compliance checklist](#) and the [Illinois Administrative Code 235](#). Items 1-37 on the compliance checklist are required of all programs administering the Preschool for All Expansion Grant.

Per Administrative Code 235, the applicant must plan to serve a high number of children and families determined to be the most in need of the services provided by the PFAE program, as indicated by high levels of poverty; illiteracy; unemployment; limited English proficiency; or other need-related indicators (e.g., school district's rate of dropouts, retention, truancy, teenage pregnancies and homeless students; high rates of infant mortality, birth trauma, low birth weight or prematurity; and high rates of child abuse and neglect). The program should be in a location where there are not enough other programs and services to fully serve all children and families who potentially could be at risk.

**Program Background/History:**

ISBE is committed to supporting early childhood education to ensure that all Illinois children develop a strong foundation for learning. Public Act 096-0948 amends Section 2-3.71 of the School Code (105ILCS 5/2-3.71) to establish the Preschool for All Expansion program to be administered on a competitive basis. The Preschool for All Expansion program emphasizes the relationship among early childhood education, family education and involvement, and future success in school.

The state's Early Learning Council envisions that every child in Illinois be able to enter kindergarten safe, healthy, eager to learn, and ready to succeed. To achieve this vision, Illinois has prioritized equitable access, effectiveness of services, and sustainability and stability of services for the system as a whole.

The goal of the Preschool for All Expansion program is to provide educational services to all 3- to 5-year-old children for those families who choose to participate. More specifically, the PFAE program focuses on providing high-quality educational programs for children who are determined to be at risk of academic failure.

The goals of the ECBG are to:

- Increase the percentage of children who begin kindergarten healthy, safe, eager to learn, and ready to succeed.
- Decrease disparities (racial, economic, geographic, etc.) in "readiness" at kindergarten entry and in achievement by third grade.

In awarding Preschool for All Expansion Grants, the Illinois State Board of Education is addressing two legislatively mandated priorities:

- First priority in awarding grants must be given to applicants that propose to serve primarily children from low-income families, including low-income working families, homeless families, families where English is not the primary language spoken in the home, or families where one or both parents are teenagers or have not completed high school.

- Second priority in awarding grants must be given to applicants proposing to serve primarily children whose family's income is less than four times the poverty guidelines updated periodically in the Federal Register by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services under the authority of 42 U.S.C. 9902(2). The successful applicant must collect evidence of family income levels for each child whose participation is based on the family income.

Applicants are encouraged to review related information found on the [Early Childhood Department webpage](#). These documents summarize activities and other considerations found in successful early childhood programs.

The Preschool for All Expansion program emphasizes the relationship among early childhood education, parenting education and involvement, and future success in school. Applicants submitting a proposal for a Preschool for All Expansion program are encouraged to think strategically about the use of early childhood funds so that each element of the effort reinforces and supports the others.

**Program Objectives:**

Goal 1: Illinois' neediest children will be identified and served.

Goal 2: Preschool children will show gains in all developmental areas, including literacy, cognitive, social, and emotional development.

Goal 3: Families will be involved in their children's educational process and will gain knowledge and skills in parenting.

Goal 4: Children and families will receive all services needed through a seamless and unduplicated system.

Goal 5: Staff will have the knowledge and skills needed to assist children in reaching their full potential as learners.

Goal 6: Staff will continue to gain skills and knowledge, based on current research and best practices, to improve outcomes for children and families.

Goal 7: The program evaluation will provide critical data and information that is used for continuous program improvement

**Policy Requirements:**

All PFAE programs shall meet the requirements for the [Early Childhood Block Grant Administrative Rules, Part 235, Subpart A](#).

**Performance Measures:**

There will be 100% capacity for enrollment of children as defined in the Early Childhood Preschool for All Expansion 3-5 electronic grant and 80% of children enrolled will be determined to benefit from participation in a publicly funded preschool program according to a program eligibility weighted criteria form. The program will conduct ongoing and regular screenings to meet eligibility requirements.

**Targets:**

**Grantees will be expected to meet the following targets during each quarter of the grant:**

- The program will maintain 100% capacity for enrollment of children as indicated in the Early Childhood Preschool for All Expansion 3-5 electronic grant.
- Eighty percent or more of children who are enrolled will be from low-income families, including low-income working families, homeless families, families where English is not the primary language spoken in the home, or families where one or both parents are teenagers or have not completed high school, as defined in the 23 Illinois Administrative Code Part 235 for the Early Childhood Preschool for All Expansion electronic grant.
- The program will conduct ongoing and regular screenings to meet eligibility requirements.
- The program will maintain a waiting list.
- The program will develop a Continuous Quality Improvement Plan that outlines activities/goals that all program staff engage in, complete, or implement.

**Performance Standards:**

- The program will maintain enrollment of at least 80% of the funded enrollment target.
- The program will maintain that 80% of children are from low-income families, including low-income working families, homeless families, families where English is not the primary language spoken in the home, or families where one or both parents are teenagers or have not completed high school.

**Deliverables and Milestones:**

Programs must complete and submit a Preschool for All Expansion Grant Periodic Performance Report annually by uploading it in the Grant Periodic Reporting System to report on the enrollment of children in the program. Information about how to complete a report can be found on the [ISBE Grant Periodic Reporting webpage](#).

***Funding Information***

**Introduction:**

The number of programs awarded that score 60 or above will be determined by the amount of funds available. As a result, all programs that score over 60 may not receive funding. ISBE reserves the right to determine the number of slots awarded based on the number of funded seats to serve at least 80% of 3- and 4-year-old eligible children. As a result, applicants may not be awarded for the full number of slots requested.

The state superintendent of education shall determine the amount of individual grant awards. The final award amounts shall be based upon:

- 1) The total amount of funds available for the Early Childhood Block Grant; and
- 2) The resources requested in the top-ranked proposals, as identified pursuant to [Part 235.50 \(b\) through \(d\)](#).

In particular, the selection of proposals for funding is based in part on geographic distribution and/or the need to provide resources to school districts and communities with varying demographic characteristics and priority consideration given awardable applications in early childhood deserts as identified in the [list linked here](#).

**Cost Sharing or Matching:**

Cost sharing or matching is not required for the purposes of this grant.

**Indirect Cost Rate:**

The federal Uniform Guidance at 2 CFR 200 requires that grantees be provided the opportunity to seek indirect cost reimbursements based on negotiated indirect cost reimbursement rates. Rates are determined and applied as follows.

**LEAs**

- LEA indirect cost rates are developed in accordance with a delegation of authority agreement between ISBE and the U.S. Department of Education (ED). The plan includes both a restricted and unrestricted rate for each individual LEA. Both the restricted and unrestricted LEA rates are published annually on the [ISBE Indirect Cost Rate Plan webpage](#). In the past, only the restricted rate was allowed when budgeting indirect cost reimbursements.

LEAs have the ability to seek indirect cost reimbursement at the published unrestricted rate for any program other than those identified as restricted by ED.

- Newly organized LEAs, ROEs, Intermediate Service Centers, area vocational centers, charter schools, university laboratory schools, and governmental entities formed by a joint agreement among LEAs utilize either the statewide average of LEA unrestricted or restricted indirect rates as appropriate, depending on program.

- LEAs that jointly administer federal program(s) utilize either the approved unrestricted or restricted indirect cost rates for the administrative district of the joint program as appropriate, depending on program.

Non-LEAs

- Programs eligible for an unrestricted indirect cost rate; not-for-profit entities; community-/faith-based organizations; and other non-LEA, non-university subgrantees utilize rates negotiated through the Governor’s Office of Management and Budget centralized process in which they will have the option to:
  - o Select the 10% de minimis rate.
  - o Submit documentation supporting a rate determined through negotiation with their federal cognizant agency.
  - o Negotiate a rate.

Non-LEA, non-university grantees may initiate the unrestricted indirect cost rate negotiation process through the [GATA Grantee Portal](#).

- Federal programs requiring the use of a restricted indirect cost rate, not-for-profit entities, community-/faith-based organizations, and other non-LEA subgrantees shall utilize the 8% default rate described at 34 CFR 76.564.
- Colleges and universities will be limited to a maximum indirect cost rate of 8% or other indirect cost rate calculated by their cognizant federal agency, whichever is less, for grants administered by ISBE.

Costs associated with Fiscal Support Services (2520), Internal Support Services (2570), Staff Support Services (2640), Data Processing Services (2660), and Direction of Business Support Services (2510) charged to the Educational Fund are properly budgeted as indirect costs.

**Funding Restrictions:**

Grantees shall use funds provided under the Early Childhood Block Grant to supplement, not supplant, funds received from any other source. (See Sections 2-3.71 and 2-3.89 of the School Code.)

Grant funds may not be used to provide religious instruction, conduct worship services, or engage in any form of proselytization.

No funds may be used to help support or sustain any institution controlled by any church or sectarian denomination. (See Article X, Section 3 of the Illinois Constitution.)

Preschool for All Expansion funds cannot be combined with full-day Head Start funding.

***Reporting Requirements***

Periodic financial reporting should be completed at a minimum of quarterly via the IWAS system. Programmatic reporting should be completed annually via the IWAS system. Additional reporting requirements are listed below.

Expenditure Reports: Cumulative expenditure reports are required quarterly. A final completion report also is required.

<b>REPORT</b>	<b>CUMULATIVE THROUGH</b>	<b>DUE IN ISBE OFFICE</b>
1	September 30, 2023	October 20, 2023
2	December 31, 2023	January 20, 2024
3	March 31, 2024	April 20, 2024
Final	June 30, 2024	July 20, 2024



**Enrollment Reports:**

All grantees must enroll each Preschool for All Expansion child in the ISBE Student Information System (SIS) by November of each grant year as indicated in the [SIS Key Dates document](#). All children enrolled must be exited by July 31 when the program is complete each school year. This reporting activity is continuous throughout the year. (Enrollments must be updated as changes occur during the year.)

## Content and Form of Application Submission

**Instructions:** Each application must be submitted in the format outlined below to be considered complete. A complete application will include all required components (the numbered items below) and signatures when mentioned. Please use the checkboxes in front of the numbers as a checklist when assembling your completed application. It is advised to attach a copy of the completed checklist with the application.

- 1. Uniform Application for State Grant Assistance (Attachment 1):** Include the name, address, and telephone and fax numbers of the entity; email, name, and telephone number of the contact person; Federal Employer Identification number; Unique Entity ID number; SAM CAGE Code; and all other listed information. The Application page must be signed by the official authorized to submit proposals. First-time applicants without a Region-County-District-Type (RCDT) code must call or email the agency contact to obtain an RCDT code **before** submitting an application.
- 2. Applicant Overview (Attachment 2):** All program information, data, and signatures on the Applicant Overview page must be completed. Include other funding (e.g., child care assistance program, Head Start, and Early Head Start, as well as other state and federal funding, etc.) the applicant has that will be used to serve the children in this application, if applicable. Must be signed by the school district superintendent or official authorized to submit the proposal or, in the case of a joint application, by the superintendent from each of the school districts and each authorized official of other eligible entities participating in the joint proposal.
- 3. Joint Application (Attachment 3):** All joint applicants for funding must complete this form.
- 4. Program Narrative, Objectives, and Activities (Attachment 4)** maximum one page per question: Use only the forms that are provided. See Program Narrative, Objectives, and Activities Requirements section (page 11 of this document) for statements that require a response.
- 5. Site Information (Attachment 5):** Sites serving children must be outside of the city of Chicago limits.
- 6. Evaluation Design (Attachment 6)** maximum one page per question: Use only the forms that are provided. See Evaluation and Design section (page 12 of this document) for statements that require a response.
- 7. State Budget Summary and Payment Schedule (Attachment 7):** The budget **MUST** be submitted on this form. No other budget form will be accepted. District budgets **MUST** be signed by the district superintendent. Other applicants should have the authorized official sign the form. The payment schedule should be based on the projected date of expenditures. Supplies, equipment, contracted services, and professional development should be requested in the month for which the expenditure is anticipated. See this [budget resource document](#) for further information.
- 8. Budget Summary Breakdown (Attachment 8):** The Budget Summary Breakdown **MUST** include descriptions of the anticipated expenditures, correlated to the line items set forth on the State Budget Summary and Payment Schedule. The Budget Summary Breakdown should also include subcontract information, if applicable.
- 9. DCFS Day Care License -- Non-School District Applicants Only**  
Applicants must provide a copy of a valid DCFS day care license.

***Program Narrative, Objectives, and Activities Requirements***

Specific requirements of implementing the Preschool for All Expansion Grant can be found within the [compliance checklist](#) and [Illinois Administrative Code 235](#). Items 1-37 on the compliance checklist are required of all programs administering the Preschool for All Expansion Grant. Programs should refer to these requirements when responding to the questions below in Attachment 4 and Attachment 6.

1. Describe 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. [FY24 ECBG priority list](#).
2. Indicate the number of slots needed to serve at least 80% of eligible children in the community and describe how the proposed program and activities align to the budget and will sufficiently meet the identified needs of the population to be served.
3. Describe how the criteria and indicators (risk factors) for identifying children and families who are eligible for the program are clearly established through weighted eligibility. Include those children and their families experiencing high levels of poverty where there is currently an insufficient number of slots in the community to serve at least 80% of all eligible children.
4. Describe the effective recruitment strategies to be implemented that are likely to ensure that the program will meet its funded enrollment by the fall SIS deadline and maintain that enrollment throughout the year. Program should ensure that all vacancies that occur throughout the year are filled within 30 days.
5. Describe how the program will target those children and families most in need of services who reside in in early childhood deserts and that are in need of additional slots to serve at least 80% eligible children.
6. Describe how the family education and involvement component will be provided.
7. Describe how the proposed program and activities align to the budget and will sufficiently meet the identified needs of the population to be served.
8. Describe how the program will establish effective linkages/referrals for families with education, health, and social service agencies (which may include mental health consultations) and other early childhood education and care providers to support families.
9. Describe the program's plan for coordination of services and funds from other educational programs serving young children and their families, including, but not limited to, the local Head Start funding (e.g., community-based childcare programs that receive Illinois Department of Human Services Child Care Assistance Program funds), while meeting the requirements of each fund source.
10. Describe how the proposed program is built upon effective research about early childhood education and aligns to the Illinois Early Learning and Development Standards. Proposed preschool programs that will serve English learners also should include how the program aligns to the English Language Development Standards.
11. Describe how the proposed program will utilize a research-based authentic assessment system that aligns with the curriculum and is used to determine each child's education plan.
12. Describe how the program will ensure racial equity in recruitment and hiring practices and ensure staff members to be hired possess the applicable licenses and endorsements for each position,

along with qualifications and experiences necessary to successfully implement a high-quality early childhood program.

13. Ensure that proposed staff hold the appropriate educator and/or professional licenses for their positions and have the qualifications and experience necessary to successfully implement a quality early childhood program.
14. Describe the program's staff development plan and how it will adequately address the needs of the program staff and prepare them to work with children from various racial and ethnic backgrounds. This includes how the program will offer a varied and full range of staff development experiences and will provide sufficient opportunities for learning to allow staff to incorporate the training into program delivery activities. These experiences must include, but not be limited to, trainings on social-emotional development, child trauma, and cultural diversity-sensitivity.
15. Describe how the program will offer a varied and full range of staff development experiences and provide sufficient opportunities for learning to allow staff to incorporate training into program delivery activities.
16. All applicants must provide the information below according to the program type:

**Non-school District Applicants:** Include the applicant's mission statement, organization structure, and goals or policies regarding early childhood programs. Provide a copy of the entity's DCFS license to demonstrate the applicant is licensed to operate as a day care facility. Additionally, provide any early childhood accreditations or other relevant experience that demonstrates the entity's success in implementing and administering programs similar to the ones funded under the ECBG.

**Joint Agreement Applicants:** Provide the goals and objectives of the collaboration and a brief description of each partner's experience in providing services similar to those to be provided under the ECBG.

**School Districts:** Include the applicant's mission statement, organization structure, and goals or policies regarding early childhood programs.

### ***Evaluation and Design***

17. Describe the program evaluation strategies and how they will include measurable outcomes for children and families that are designed to effectively gauge the success of the program.
18. Describe how the program will utilize data that is collected to ensure equity in programming and inform the Continuous Quality Improvement Plan.

### **Review Criteria**

#### ***Application Review and Selection Process***

The selection of the grantees will be based upon the overall quality of the application. The scoring is based upon the following criteria:

- "Need" is defined as the identification of stakeholders, facts, and evidence that demonstrate the proposal supports the grant program purpose.
- "Capacity" is defined as the ability of an entity to execute the grant project according to the project requirements.

- “Quality” is defined as the totality of features and characteristics of a service, project, or product that indicate its ability to satisfy the requirements of the grant program.
- “Population to be Served” is defined as preschool education primarily for at-risk and low-income children ages 3 years old to kindergarten enrollment age as defined in Section 10-20.12 of the School Code [105 ILCS 5/10-20.12] to include those programs and activities that meet the requirements of Section 2-3.71 of the School Code [105 ILCS 5/2-3.71]. For the purposes of this Part, "at risk" is defined as those children who because of their home and community environment are subject to such language, cultural, economic, and like disadvantages to cause them to have been determined as a result of screening procedures (to be carried out in conformance with Section 235.20(c)(5) of this Part) to be at risk of academic failure. (Section 2-3.71(a) (4.5) of the School Code). This section would meet the Need definition as defined under Review Criteria.
- “Quality of Proposed Program” is defined as a proposed program and activities that will sufficiently meet the identified needs of the population to be served and include child and parent activities designed to enhance child development and parent effectiveness and, ultimately, school readiness. This section would meet the Quality definition as defined under Review Criteria.
- “Experience and Qualifications” are defined as the proposed staff that hold the appropriate educator and/or professional licenses for their positions and have the qualifications and experience necessary to successfully implement a high-quality early childhood program. This section would meet the Capacity definition as defined under Review Criteria.
- “Cost-effectiveness” is defined as the program’s cost-effectiveness as evidenced by the cost of proposed services in relation to the numbers to be served and the services to be provided.

*Proposals that score under 60 points will not be funded.*

***Tiebreaker***

In the event of a tie, the applicant with the greatest number of slots needed to serve 80% of eligible children in their community will be given priority.

***Evaluation Criteria***

These overall criteria are built into the rubric below. The attachment number in the parentheses following the criteria lists the portion of the proposal that will be used to determine if the criteria has been met. The points for each criterion section as well as the individual criteria are also included in the rubric.

Following the notification of grant awards, an applicant may request copies of reviewer scores and comments by contacting the Early Childhood Department at [earlychi@isbe.net](mailto:earlychi@isbe.net).

**Selection criteria and point values are as follows:**

Not Provided	Very Limited	Somewhat Limited	Moderate	Strong	Very Strong
0	1	2	3	4	5
Proposal requirements are absent.	Proposal provides very few details to meet the project outcomes.	Proposal is unclear and lacks enough evidence to meet project outcomes.	Proposal provides moderate detail and conveys potential to meet project outcomes.	Proposal provides good detail and strong evidence to meet project outcomes.	Proposal exceeds expectations and provides a solid plan to meet project outcomes.

Section 1: Population to Be Served (30 Points) This section would meet the Need definition as defined under Review Criteria.	Possible Points
The area to be served, as indicated by high levels of poverty, has an insufficient number of other programs and services to fully serve all children and families who potentially could be at risk. (Attachment 4, Question 1)	5
The number of slots needed to serve at least 80% of eligible children in the community is indicated and how the proposed program and activities align to the budget and will sufficiently meet the identified needs of the population to be served are described (Attachment 4, Question 2)	5
The criteria and indicators for identifying children and families who are eligible for the program are clearly established through weighted eligibility and include those children and their families experiencing high levels of poverty where there is currently an insufficient number of classrooms in the community to serve at least 80% of eligible children. <a href="#">FY24 ECBG priority list</a> . (Attachment 4, Question 3)	5
Effective recruitment strategies are proposed that are likely to ensure that the maximum number of eligible children and families are enrolled in the program by the fall SIS deadline and that the enrollment is maintained throughout the year. The program ensures that all vacancies that occur throughout the year will be filled within 30 days. (Attachment 4, Question 4)	5
The program describes how it will target those children and families most in need of services who reside in an early childhood desert and demonstrate a need for additional slots in the community. (Attachment 4, Question 5)	5
The program describes how the family education and involvement component will be provided. (Attachment 4, Question 6)	5
Section 2: Quality of Proposed Program (40 points) This section would meet the Quality definition as defined under Review Criteria.	Possible Points
The program narrative (program and activities) will be compared to the budget to make sure the program will sufficiently meet the identified needs of the population to be served, specifically populations with high levels of poverty that demonstrate need. (Attachment 4, Question 7, and Attachment 8)	5
The proposal describes how the program will provide for effective linkages among families, education, health and social service agencies, and child care providers. (Attachment 4, Question 8)	5
The program has a plan for coordination of services and funds from other educational programs serving young children and their families, including, but not limited to, the local Head Start program. (Attachment 4, Question 9)	5
The proposed program is built upon effective research about early childhood education and aligned to the Illinois Early Learning and Development Standards. Preschool programs that are proposed to serve English learners should align to the Early English Language Development Standards. (Attachment 4, Question 10)	5
The proposed program utilizes a research-based authentic assessment system that aligns with the curriculum and is used to determine each child's education plan. (Attachment 4, Question 11)	5
The proposal describes how the program will ensure racial equity in recruitment and hiring practices and ensure staff members to be hired possess the applicable licenses and endorsements for each position, along with qualifications and experiences necessary to successfully implement a high-quality early childhood program. (Attachment 4, Question 12)	5
The program evaluation strategies include measurable outcomes for children and families that are designed to effectively gauge the success of the program. (Attachment 6, Question 17)	5

The program will utilize data that is collected to inform the Continuous Quality Improvement Plan. (Attachment 6, Question 18)	5
<b>Section 3: Experience and Qualifications (20 Points)</b> This section would meet the Capacity definition as defined under Review Criteria.	Possible Points
Proposed staff hold the appropriate educator and/or professional licenses for their positions and have the qualifications and experience necessary to successfully implement a quality early childhood program. (Attachment 4, Question 13)	5
The proposal describes the program’s staff development plan and how it will adequately address the needs of the program staff and prepare them to work with children from various racial and ethnic backgrounds. The plan includes how the program will offer a varied and full range of staff development experiences and will provide sufficient opportunities for learning to allow staff to incorporate the training into program delivery activities. These experiences must include, but are not limited to, trainings on social-emotional development, child trauma, and cultural diversity-sensitivity. (Attachment 4, Question 14)	5
The proposal describes how the program will offer a varied and full range of staff development experiences and provide sufficient opportunities for learning to allow staff to incorporate training into program delivery activities. (Attachment 4, Question 15)	5
<b>Applicants That Are Not a School District OR Joint Agreement:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include the applicant’s mission statement, organization structure, and goals or policies regarding early childhood programs.</li> <li>• Provide the licensing information the applicant has to operate as a day care facility and provide any early childhood accreditations or other relevant experience that demonstrates success in implementing and administering programs similar to the ones funded under the Early Childhood Block Grant.</li> <li>• Describe successful track record with similar grants or contracts.</li> </ul> <b>Joint Agreement Applicants:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide the goals and objectives of the collaboration and a brief description of each partner's experience in providing services similar to those specified under the Early Childhood Block Grant program.</li> </ul> <b>School Districts:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include the applicant’s mission statement, organization structure, and goals or policies regarding early childhood programs. (Attachment 4, Question 16)</li> </ul>	5
<b>Section 4: Cost Effectiveness (10 points)</b>	Possible Points
The program is cost-effective as evidenced by the cost of proposed services in relation to the numbers to be served and the services to be provided. (Program Budget)	10
<b>Section 5: Priority Consideration (55 Points)</b>	Possible Points
Applicant is offering to provide services in early childhood deserts. A “desert” is understood to mean that there are not enough publicly funded seats to serve at least 80% of 3- and 4- year-old eligible children.	20
Applicant currently does not receive Early Childhood Block Grant funding.	25
Community-based applicants that currently do not have ECBG funding.	10