



Preschool Development Grants

Expansion Grants

GRANTEE ABSTRACT

Illinois

Overview

Illinois proposes to expand High Quality Preschool to reach an additional 13,760 Eligible Children by the end of 2018 through a new program option in its Preschool for All state-funded preschool program.

Project Objectives and Activities

Dubbed “More at Four,” this new program option builds upon the existing quality components of Preschool for All including:

- teacher with Professional Educator License with Early Childhood Endorsement and Special Education, Bilingual and/or English as a Second Language Endorsement as indicated by population served;
- aide with endorsement as Paraprofessional Educator;
- class size of no more than 20 children;
- curriculum and assessment system aligned with Illinois Early Learning and Development Standards;
- inclusion of children with disabilities;
- provision of snacks and meals as appropriate for program length;
- parent education and engagement services; and
- comprehensive developmental and health screening

Lead Agency

Illinois Office of the Governor – Office of Early Childhood Development

Year 1 Federal Award Amount

\$20,000,000

Plan Period

January 1, 2015 – December 31, 2018

Preschool Development Grants will support states to build, develop, and expand voluntary, high-quality preschool programs for children from low- and moderate-income families.

There are two types of grants.

Development Grants: For states that currently serve less than 10 percent of four-year-olds and have not received a Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) grant

Expansion Grants: For states that currently serve 10 percent or more of four-year-olds or have received a Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) grant

by adding requirements that these programs provide:

- a full school day of instruction;
- Comprehensive Services, including connections to health, mental health, dental and social services;
- intensive parent engagement services;
- universal and targeted supports for positive behavioral and social-emotional development;

- at least 60 minutes per day of physical activity; and
- instructional leaders (master teachers, curriculum coordinators, or education coordinators) with specific early childhood expertise and expertise in serving culturally, linguistically and ability diverse children, in a ratio of no more than one per ten classrooms to focus on providing high quality embedded professional development to teachers.

The More at Four program option has been designed specifically to address the needs of children with highest needs, including children in poverty or deep poverty, those who are homeless or involved with the child welfare system, and those who have multiple other significant risk factors such as parents who themselves have low education or a disability. Communities will be supported in identifying such children early—at or even before birth—and developing continuous “pipelines” of high quality services for these children from birth through early elementary school. Illinois will invest in developing a regional support structure for local community collaborations; these collaborations will focus on ensuring children with high needs receive continuous, high quality services.

The State will also support a Preschool to Third Grade Continuity Project in collaboration with a state university to support alignment and integration of curriculum and comprehensive services among preschool providers and K-3 schools in the Selected Communities. The State will expand its PFA monitoring, professional development, and coaching programs to accommodate the growth in PFA services, and will conduct an evaluation of the

More at Four program options. All More at Four programs will participate in ExceleRate Illinois, the State’s Quality Rating and Improvement System.

The State will contribute approximately \$128 Million over four years as matching funds for the project as part of the State’s overall Birth to Five Initiative.

High-Need Communities to be served under Illinois’ Plan	
Addison	Monroe County
Aurora	Normal
Bolingbrook	North Chicago
Carpentersville	Rock Island
Chicago	Rockford
Cicero	St. Clair County
Decatur	Suburbs South of Chicago
Elgin	
Jefferson County	West Chicago
Joliet	Wheaton/Warrenville