

Title: Washington State Preschool Development Grant - Expansion 2015-2019

Applicant: State of Washington Lead Agency: Department of Early Learning (DEL)

Overview of Proposed Project

Washington State proposes a bold plan to dramatically expand high quality preschool options in seven high-need regions across the state. Since 1985, Washington has been operating the Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP), the state-funded comprehensive preschool program. While ECEAP ranks high on quality, implementing all the components of High Quality Preschool at varying levels of implementation, limited resources only allow the state to serve an estimated 21% of four year olds with family incomes at or below 200% of the federal poverty level. With new federal preschool expansion funds serving as powerful catalyst, Washington proposes to *more than double* the number of eligible children receiving high quality preschool and improve existing ECEAP slots by 2019. Washington is poised to significantly expand preschool and has several key assets to do so:

The Department of Early Learning (DEL): DEL is Washington’s cabinet-level lead agency and is the home to the state’s key early programs and services, including state preschool, the Head Start State Collaboration Office, Child Care and Development Block Grant, and Early Support of Infant/Toddlers (IDEA Part C). DEL is also the grantee for federal home-visiting funds (MIECHV) and the Race to The Top - Early Learning Challenge Grant (RTT-ELC).

Entitlement Statute: Through legislation, Washington has a goal to make voluntary preschool an entitlement for the state’s most vulnerable children (those with family incomes <110% of FPL, or with special developmental or educational needs) by 2018-19.

Washington Preschool: As required by a landmark state senate bill in 2011, The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction & DEL convened a group stakeholders and advocates to create a comprehensive plan for an expanded voluntary statewide preschool program. The plan calls for expanded preschool services that build upon the current ECEAP program, with increased intensity (more full day services) and increased access to more children.

Strong Structural Supports: Thanks to RTT-ELC and other state and federal investments, Washington has strong early learning systems to support preschool expansion, including a growing TQRIS (Early Achievers), a comprehensive kindergarten entry assessment (WaKIDS), aligned Program Standards, Early Learning Guidelines, and strong support from, and collaboration with programs and partners along the birth through third grade continuum.

Project Objectives and Activities

Washington’s preschool expansion plan utilizes combined state and federal preschool funds to:

1. Add 14,000 new High Quality Preschool slots in seven high-need regions across the state
2. Improve 4,000 current part day ECEAP slots into full day High Quality Preschool slots

Proposed Project Outcomes by End of Grant	
# Kids Served	Child Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 18,000 total High Quality Preschool slots • 54% of eligible children (<200% FPL) participating 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 90% of preschool graduates ready for kindergarten in each essential learning domain, • 80% of preschool graduates ready in ALL essential learning domains

95% of new federal funds will be spent on the expansion and improvement activities above. The remaining 5% of new federal funds will be targeted on critical quality improvement and infrastructure activities, including:

- Statewide implementation of evidence-based curriculum training and fidelity supports
- New professional development for Preschool Coaches to enhance the overall statewide capacity to providing ongoing evidence-based support to preschool teachers and classrooms
- Expansion of the P-3 Leadership Institute, increasing opportunities for local teams of early learning and K-12 administrators to advance their skill and expertise in supporting strong P-3 systems and alignment in local communities

Existing state, federal and matching funds will support these additional quality improvements:

- Create new BA pathways so more preschool teachers can attain BA degrees in early childhood, including an innovative approach in which colleges and universities share “core coursework” that is integrated into each institution’s degree requirements, and will lead to BA degrees being available at community colleges, universities, online and in-person modalities
- Enhanced professional development opportunities that increase preschool program capacity to serve children who may need additional supports, including children with special needs, and those who are Dual Language Learners

Subgrantee and Partner Organizations

Washington’s plan includes partnering with 47 existing preschool contractors (subgrantees) that are school districts, educational service districts, community colleges, non-profit organizations and child care programs, as well as developing new preschool capacity.