



## Preschool Development Grants

# Expansion Grants

### GRANTEE ABSTRACT

## Louisiana

### Overview

Louisiana believes children thrive in a unified, high quality early childhood care and education system where there are expectations for children's achievement and progress; families who are able to choose the option that best suits their children; and knowledgeable, skilled teachers who support children's learning and development toward kindergarten readiness. As a result of groundbreaking state legislation (Act 3, 2012), Louisiana is unifying preschool, Head Start, and child care programs through local early childhood networks (Community Network Pilots) that ensure at-risk children have equitable access to high-quality preschool. With close support from the state, half of Louisiana's parishes have already established these local networks, or consortium of early learning providers, and have made demonstrable progress in three areas:

- Collaborative Leadership: Developing a collaborative leadership structure including child care, Head Start, public preschool, and nonpublic preschool leaders that develops plans, track progress, and continually strives for better kindergarten readiness outcomes;
- Teacher Support: Providing training, coaching, and evidence-based professional development to help all teachers improve interactions and instruction of young children;

### Lead Agency

Office of the Superintendent – Early Childhood

### Year 1 Federal Award Amount

\$2,437,982

### 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** are 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** are for states that currently serve 10 percent or more of four-year-olds or have received an RTT-ELC grant.

- Coordinated Enrollment: Coordinating information and applications across all programs to make it easier for families to access quality options.

The remaining communities are currently learning from existing Community Network Pilots and are expected to launch their own in early 2015.

Louisiana seeks \$32 million over 4 years to expand the state's existing high-quality preschool programs in high-need

communities through a parent choice model, and build a technology system to consistently

measure program quality using program-based report cards and provide useful information for families and providers. As part of Louisiana’s ambitious and achievable plan, the state will work to achieve the following goals:

- **Increased Access through Choice:** Provide families of more than 4,500 at-risk children in Louisiana equitable access to high-quality childhood choices in diverse settings including child care, Head Start, nonpublic and public schools;
- **A Unified System:** Unify early childhood system by empowering local leaders to coordinate efforts to improve child outcomes;
- **Sustainable Funding:** Transition to sustainable funding for high quality programs; and
- **Improvement and Accountability:** Improve quality and access, measure success with outcomes-based program report cards, and hold local leaders accountable.

### Project Objectives and Activities

Louisiana has an ambitious and achievable plan that will decrease the four-year old access gap in the state and provide more families choices for preschool. Louisiana will use \$23.7 million to open 1800 new preschool seats, serving more than 4,500 at-risk children. In addition, Louisiana will use \$7.4 million to improve services for nearly 6,000 children. To support this work, Louisiana will leverage \$13 million in state matching funds that support

Community Network Pilots, representing a 40% match of federal funds.

In year 1, the state will subgrant with high-need communities to provide 340 new slots. These communities were chosen based on three factors:

*Demonstrated Success as a Consortium of Early Learning Providers (Community Network Pilot):* Capacity to coordinate enrollment and implement a parent choice model as demonstrated by participation as a lead agency in a consortium of local providers.

*Demonstrated Need through Unmet Parent Demand:* Demonstrated need for additional preschool seats, as determined through an annual application process; and

*Communities Most At-Risk:* Designation as a high need community according to the Louisiana State/Tulane University’s state report: *Early Childhood Risk and Reach*.

In Years 2-4 the state will continue to support existing slots funded by the grant as well as run a competitive process to add up to 660 new slots each year, using the three criteria above.

High Need Communities to be served under Louisiana’s Plan	
<b>Caddo</b>	<b>Lincoln</b>
<b>City of Monroe (Ouachita)</b>	<b>Orleans</b>
<b>Iberville</b>	<b>Rapides</b>