



Preschool Development Grants

Development Grants

GRANTEE ABSTRACT

Montana

Overview

Montana is focused on increasing high-quality preschool for children throughout the state as evidenced by Governor Bullock's Early Edge Preschool Initiative which would provide \$37 million in state funds for preschool education, new program and accreditation standards for state funded preschool, and revised education requirements and licensure qualifications for public preschool teachers. These are critical steps to ensuring a quality education for Montana's youngest learners, but the state also faces some challenges. Montana is geographically vast with a sparse population. Nearly half of Montana children live at or below 200% of the federal poverty level.

This grant will help Montana improve access to high quality preschool education in 24 high needs communities, eight of which are on Indian lands. The Governor's Office, The Office of Instruction, and The Department of Health and Human Services will implement the grant. Montana has instituted successful early literacy programs in high needs communities and these programs will serve as models and mentors for new programs that are added each year of the grant.

The Subgrantees have been categorized in Cohorts. Cohort I consists of Early Learning Providers that have been part of the Montana Striving Readers Project (MSRP) and have already begun to implement many of the

Lead Agency

Montana Office of Public Instruction

Year 1 Federal Award Amount

\$10,000,000

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 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.

components of Montana's Program Standards. Cohort II consists of Early Learning Providers who are in districts that are implementing a MSRP. Cohort III consists of Head Starts on Indian Reservations that do not have schools participating in the MSRP. Cohort I will serve as a mentor to Cohorts II and III through ongoing collaboration and site visits facilitated by the State Implementation Team.

Project Objectives and Activities

The State will accomplish the project activities and objectives in phases: Phase 1: Developing, Phase 2: Expanding, Phase 3: Implementing, and Phase 4: Sustaining. All activities will

ultimately lead to the sustaining phase. The State has four primary ambitious and achievable outcomes, which will be measured by our external evaluator Education Northwest. See table below for project activities and outcomes.

- Implement the Montana Program standards within each high-need community to ensure high quality preschools for all eligible children. The expansion will include new slots for state preschool programs.
- Expand a comprehensive early learning assessment system which will be implemented and sustained by subgrantees beginning in the first year of implementation.
- Align standards (both program and content) from birth to grade three.
- Expand, implement and sustain comprehensive services in the high-need communities.
- Expand a comprehensive early learning assessment system which will be implemented and sustained by subgrantees beginning in the first year of grant implementation.

Project Outcomes

- Expand the number and percentage of children served overall in state preschool programs.
- Expand the number and percentage of eligible children in high-need communities served by high-quality preschool programs and who are ready for kindergarten as determined by a valid and reliable assessment for kindergarten readiness.

- Develop and implement a kindergarten entry assessment system for participating children by the end of Year Three of the grant.

Support targeted early learning providers and gather data about the implementation of structural elements of high quality preschool programs as identified in Montana’s program standards.

High Need Communities to be Served under Montana’s Plan	
Anaconda	Helena
Boulder	Kalispell
Box Elder	Lame Deer
Bozeman	Lewistown
Browning	Libby
Butte	Livingston
Crow	Pablo
Crow Agency	Poplar
East Helena	Point
Fort Belknap	Rocky Boy
Great Falls	Ronan
Hardin	Wolf