

## Project Abstract

### 2014 Preschool Development Grants – Expansion Grants

#### State of New Mexico Children Youth and Families Department

- **Overview**

The federal Preschool Development – Expansion Grant competition provides New Mexico with an opportunity to create an ambitious and achievable plan to ensure that many more four-year-old children have access to improved early learning programs and enter kindergarten with the skills, knowledge and dispositions they need to be successful.

- **Project Objectives and Activities**

New Mexico’s Preschool Development-Expansion Grant proposal has five primary goals to increase quality and access to high-quality preschool programs:

**(1) Build on the state’s commitment to high-quality preschool programs to expand access to High-Quality Preschool Programs.** New Mexico’s State Preschool Program, *New Mexico PreK*, is a voluntary program created by the *Pre-Kindergarten Act of 2005* and jointly administered by the Children Youth and Families Department (CYFD) and the Public Education Department (PED). The purpose of *New Mexico PreK* is to ensure that every child in New Mexico has the opportunity to attend a high quality childhood program before entering kindergarten. It is expected that New Mexico’s eligibility of receiving up to \$12.5 million per year for four years will result in up to 1,000 additional children served in New Mexico PreK in at least 50 classrooms within the identified High-Need Communities.

**(2) Expand high-quality preschool programs in high-need communities to increase preschool program slots in New Mexico’s identified Early Childhood Investment Zone communities.** Thirty-five school districts (of 89 statewide) have been identified as New Mexico Early Childhood Investment Zones based on both socio-ecological factors and public school factors that indicate higher levels of risk for school failure. Communities within the Early Childhood Investment Zones will be funded to either expand existing New Mexico PreK slots or create new New Mexico PreK programs through a competitive proposal process.

**(3) Ensure quality in New Mexico preschool programs by implementing:**

- *FOCUS*, New Mexico’s Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System;
- Common Program Standards across all publicly funded New Mexico PreK Programs;

- Comprehensive Assessment System as the basis for continuous quality improvement;
- The New Mexico Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA); and
- The New Mexico early learning data system providing information for educators, families and policymakers.

**(4) Collaborate with our Subgrantee, Regional Education Cooperative (REC) IX to ensure strong partnerships.** REC IX is an educational consortium serving several rural districts within New Mexico. REC IX will work with preschool programs to increase the number and percentage of eligible children served in High-Quality Preschool Programs during each year of the grant period, beginning no later than the end of year one of the grant period, through the creation of new and expanded programs in the Early Childhood Investment Zones.

**(5) Align the state’s High-Quality Preschool Programs within a birth through third grade continuum.** New Mexico PreK Programs will meet age appropriate standards and expectations that fit within the growth, development and learning benchmarks of New Mexico’s Early Learning Guidelines for children birth to eight years old.

- **Proposed Project Outcomes**

- a) Serve more children in High-Quality Preschool Programs in Early Childhood Investment Zones including small, rural, and tribal communities
- b) Increase the percentage of students ready for kindergarten
- c) Identify more children in need of early intervention through increased screenings and provide services
- d) Increase parental engagement
- e) Improve classroom environments and children and adult interactions
- f) Increase inclusion of students with disabilities and dual language learners
- g) Increase workforce competencies through high-quality professional development and university scholarships

- **Names of other organizations for Collaboration:** New Mexico Public Education Department; Regional Education Cooperative IX; UNM Continuing Education, New Mexico Association for the Education of Young Children.