



Preschool Development Grants

# Expansion Grants

GRANTEE ABSTRACT

## Tennessee

### Overview

The State of Tennessee here details an ambitious and achievable goal to partner with a Consortium of Local Educational Agencies in Shelby County, including the districts responsible for all schools in the City of Memphis, and Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools (MNPS), to expand High-Quality Pre-Kindergarten in their communities.

### *Project Objectives and Activities*

The primary objectives are to substantially expand access to pre-K in these communities and to ensure 100 percent of state preschool programs in these communities meet the definition of High Quality Preschool Programs put forth in the grant. In addition to opening new seats, we will invest in quality, including professional development at the state level and an innovative coaching program in Nashville.

### *Proposed Project Outcomes*

Federal funds will pay for 1,400 new high-quality pre-K seats and improvements to 3,478 more new and existing seats. By the end of the grant period, when these funds are combined with local matching funds, more than 5,000 children every year, representing more than 10 percent of our Eligible Child population statewide, will be in seats funded through this program. In addition, we have ambitious goals for quality, including that 75 percent of students in participating classrooms will enter Kindergarten ready to learn.

### **Lead Agency**

Tennessee Department of Education

### **Year 1 Federal Award Amount**

\$17,500,000

### **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.

Our two Subgrantees are the largest and highest-need communities in our state, but both have made extending and expanding high-quality pre-K a major priority and have built the requisite local stakeholder networks to sustain this effort after the grant period. During the grant period alone, matching investments and commitments from the local networks in both TN Abstract 2 communities—local government, philanthropy, and the private sector—this program will commit a total of more than \$109 million in federal, state, local, and private funds and in-kind support to a target of opening 2,230 new high-quality preschool programs, and improving a total of 2,958 existing seats.

This project is building on a strong base of investment in both delivering pre-K and improving quality here in Tennessee; we are working not only to get more four-year-olds into the classroom, but also to ensure they are moving towards sustained gains in school readiness and achievement in elementary school. This work has been underway since the passage of the Voluntary Pre-K for Tennessee Act in 2005 that today serves more than 18,000 children in our state with more than \$87 million in state funding. In addition, the Peabody Research Institute (PRI) at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, one of the leading early-childhood education research centers in the United States, has been engaged in a comprehensive assessment of the quality and effectiveness of our VPK program, work that continues today. PRI also partners with MNPS in an innovative learning center-based research project that is examining what teaching and administrative techniques actually lead to the best outcomes for children. PRI is a partner in this application and will extend their expertise in evaluating pre-K programs to evaluating the effect of these new and improved seats on our state's most high-need children.

Thanks to existing state VPK framework, we are confident that we can distribute funds to the Shelby and MNPS with a minimum of administrative costs, and that each Subgrantee will efficiently and conscientiously direct the sub-granted funds towards bringing a rich, effective pre-K experience to the Tennesseans and their families who will benefit from it most.

**High Need Communities to be served  
under Tennessee's Plan**

**Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools  
Shelby County**