



Preschool Development Grants

# Expansion Grants

## GRANTEE ABSTRACT

# Virginia

## Overview

Virginia has developed a bold and innovative plan for transforming its existing State Preschool Program into a national exemplar through adoption of highly effective best practices to improve quality, access, and impact in High Need Communities.

Building from the successful Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI) that has supported the school readiness of at-risk four-year-olds since 1996, Virginia will create a more comprehensive and effective State Preschool Program called *VPI Plus* (VPI+). VPI+ will meet or exceed every element of the definition of a High Quality Preschool Program and will be implemented through a mixed delivery system. By the end of the grant term, 3,179 four-year-olds at or below 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Line will be served annually through VPI+ in eleven local school divisions.

These Subgrantees represent the geographic and demographic diversity of the Commonwealth, allowing us to field test and refine VPI+ innovations throughout Virginia to ensure uniform high quality, appropriate flexibility tailored to local circumstances, and broad replicability.

## *Project Objectives and Activities*

Increase access to High Quality Preschool.

- VPI+ will establish 88 new classrooms in Year 1, increasing to nearly 100

### **Lead Agency**

Virginia 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.

classrooms by Year 4 (serving more than 1,200 students in Year 1, increasing to 1,669 students by Year 4) using a model that enhances quality in three ways: installs rigorous, research-tested professional development and curriculum to ensure teacher effectiveness and classroom quality; fosters broad community partnerships to ensure more systematic provision of Comprehensive Services to support low-income four-year-olds and their families; and creates effective pathways to fully engage parents and families, especially those who are hard-to-reach and culturally and linguistically diverse.

Increase the number of High-Quality Preschool Programs

- Virginia will improve the quality of 96 existing classrooms serving 1,470 students annually in diverse settings. With grant support, Subgrantees will extend VPI+ best practices to existing classrooms within their division and use community partnerships to expand high quality practices to non-school programs.

Strengthen the statewide infrastructure supporting the State Preschool Program.

- Virginia will improve its Longitudinal Data System; expand its continuous quality improvement system; systematize the use of formative and summative assessment tools; ensure rigorous evaluation; and build a higher caliber pre-service and in-service training and credentialing system to ensure a cadre of highly competent early educators for Virginia's Preschool children.

Pursue policy changes to promote statewide improvements to standards, practice and access.

- The Preschool Expansion Grant will enable Virginia to test, refine, and expand High Quality
- Preschool programs statewide, with a priority on improving state policy to expand access, particularly in High Need Communities.

*Proposed Project Outcomes*

Some of the measurable outcomes to be achieved include:

- Measurable improvements in children's outcomes, including school readiness.
- A 17 percent increase in the number of slots available in High Quality Preschool Programs.
- A 15 percent reduction in the number of unserved at-risk four-year-olds in VPI+ divisions.

- Demonstrable progress toward a more robust mixed delivery system through measurable increases in the percentage of High Quality classrooms located in non-public school settings.
- Improved policies expanding access, quality and support for State Preschool Programs.

*Collaborating Organizations*

The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) is the lead agency for VPI+. VDOE and the eleven Subgrantees will work in close partnership with the Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) and the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation (VECF) and its statewide Smart Beginnings network of local public-private school readiness partnerships. These local networks will be instrumental in fostering enhanced Comprehensive Services in all settings, effective strategies to more fully engage families, and through the TQRIS, a sound framework for continuous program quality improvement for VPI+.

Virginia's ambitious and achievable plan counts on partnership with the University of Virginia's Center for the Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning (CASTL) – arguably the nation's most prestigious applied research center focused on early education teacher effectiveness and classroom quality. CASTL will guide all professional development and classroom improvement methods with the Subgrantees, including the provision of research-based coaching techniques that have successfully improved teacher effectiveness and student outcomes. Drawing on Virginia's unique assets, from CASTL's highly focused research, to our cutting edge, rigorous TQRIS, to our nationally recognized public-private network of local Smart Beginnings, VPI+ will harness these partnerships to build a "first in class" Preschool Program. VPI+ will be

accessible to and supportive of families, staffed by a highly-skilled cadre of teachers who are part of a vibrant statewide learning community, and sustainable in Virginia's diverse High-Needs Communities, creating a strong pathway for Virginia's preschool success.

<b>High Need Communities to be served under Virginia's Plan</b>	
<b>Brunswick</b>	<b>Petersburg</b>
<b>Chesterfield</b>	<b>Prince William</b>
<b>Fairfax</b>	<b>Richmond</b>
<b>Giles</b>	<b>Sussex</b>
<b>Henrico</b>	<b>Winchester</b>
<b>Norfolk</b>	