

Preschool Development Grant Birth Through Five (PDG B-5) Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Who held the competition for the PDG B-5?

A: The Administration for Children and Families (ACF) at the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), jointly with the Department of Education (ED).

Q: Who was eligible to apply?

A: All 50 States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Q: Who submitted the application on behalf of Illinois?

A: Lead Agency: Illinois Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development (GOECD); Fiscal Agent: Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE).

Q: What are the purposes of the PDG B-5 initiative?

A:

- Develop, update, or implement a strategic plan that facilitates collaboration and coordination among existing programs of early childhood care and education in a mixed delivery system across the State;
- More efficiently use existing Federal, State, local, and non-governmental resources to align and strengthen the delivery of existing programs;
- Encourage partnerships among the wide range of ECE programs and service partners that make up the B-5 Early Childhood State System;
- Expand parental choice and knowledge about existing programs; and
- Enhance school readiness for children from low-income and disadvantaged families, including during children's transition into elementary school by sharing best practices between and among ECE providers.

Q: How was the grant structured?

A:

- *Activity One:* Conduct or update a thorough statewide birth through five needs assessment of the availability and quality of existing programs/services in the State.
- *Activity Two:* Develop or update a strategic plan, based on needs assessment results, that recommends collaboration, coordination, and quality improvement activities among existing programs.
- *Activity Three:* Maximize parental choice and knowledge; promote and increase involvement by parents and family members in the development and transition of their children.
- *Activity Four:* Share best practices among early childhood care and education program providers in the State to increase collaboration and efficiency of services, including to improve transitions from such programs to elementary school.
- *Activity Five:* After activities one and two are completed, improve the overall quality of early childhood care and education programs in the State.

Note: Work in Activity Five cannot begin until after the statewide birth through five needs assessment (Activity One) and related strategic plan (Activity Two) are completed, submitted, and approved by the Departments.

Q: How much money could Illinois apply to receive?

A:

- Award floor = \$500,000
- Award ceiling = \$15,000,000*
- State match requirement = **minimum of 30%**
- Project period = 12 months

*Specific to funding for Activity Five, States must seek funding appropriate to the anticipated grant time remaining after the statewide birth through five needs assessment and related strategic plan that meet the descriptions and requirements in this FOA have been completed, submitted, and approved by the Departments.

Q: How will award and award amounts be determined?

A:

- No State with a score below 70 will be eligible to receive a PDG B-5 grant award.
- All States, starting with the highest score and moving to the lowest score above 69, will be awarded a grant until all funds are awarded.
- Applications may be funded in whole or in part. Successful applicants may be funded at an amount lower than that requested.
- The actual award amounts will be determined by:
 - the Departments' evaluation of the applicant's rationale and the supporting evidence that the activities can reasonably be accomplished within the one-year grant project period, and
 - the number of applications received, and the amounts requested.
- If necessary, the Departments will work with States that are eligible for an award to make any adjustments before finalizing PDG B-5 awards.

Q: For how much did Illinois apply?

A: Illinois applied for \$5.2 million to support the work across the five activities. More budget information will be made public after Illinois finds out whether or not (and for how much) we were awarded.

Q: If Illinois is awarded, how will the funds be distributed?

A: Per Illinois Procurement Code (30 ILCS 500/20-15) opportunities for funding must go through a competitive bidding process. There are four situations that would not require procurement: Intergovernmental Agreements; (30 ILCS 500 / 1-10) (b) (1) contracts between the State and its political subdivisions or other governments, or between State governmental bodies; Personal Service Contracts (30 ILCS 500 / 1-10) (b) (4) hiring of an individual as employee and not as an independent contractor, whether pursuant to an employment code or policy or by contract directly with that individual; and Sole Source; (30 ILCS 500 / 20-25) in

accordance with standards set by rule, contracts may be awarded without use of the specified method of source selection when there is only one economically feasible source for the item. (Administrative Rules Section 1.2025) - *Sole source procurement is permissible when a requirement is available from only a single supplier. Sole economically feasible procurement is permissible when only one supplier is deemed economically feasible.*

Q: Is there an opportunity for a no-cost extension period?

A: This Initial Grant is a one-year grant and all activities related to this grant must end at the end of that grant year. However, States that are awarded a PDG B-5 Initial Grant, as well as existing PDG Development and Expansion Grantees, will be eligible to apply for PDG B-5 Renewal Grants for years 2-4. Contingent upon the appropriation of funds by Congress in 2019, the Departments will issue a new FOA for PDG B-5 Renewal Grants.

Q: When was the application due?

A: Most States and territories had to submit their PDG B-5 application no later than 11:59 p.m. on Tuesday, November 6, 2018. A 2-week extension was granted to Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, and South Carolina until 11:59 p.m. on Tuesday, November 20, 2018, due to the impact of Hurricanes Florence and Michael. In addition, due to the impact of Super Typhoon Yutu on CNMI and Guam, those two territories were added to the list of States and territories that received a 2-week extension until 11:59 p.m. on Tuesday, November 20, 2018.

Q: When did Illinois submit their application?

A: 11:09am CST on November 2, 2018.

Q: When will the proposals be reviewed?

A: All proposals will go through peer review during the week of November 26–30, 2018, with the contracts being awarded no later than December 31, 2018.

Q: Was Illinois eligible for priority preference points?

A: No. Applicants that have not previously received Race to the Top -Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) or Preschool Development Grant (PDG) funding and that obtain a score of 70 or better received 10 bonus points since they have not benefited from prior federal RTT-ELC or PDG funding.

Q: What was the process for developing Illinois' proposal?

A: At an open Early Learning Council Executive Committee meeting in August 2018, a planning committee of volunteers was formed. The PDG B-5 planning committee was comprised of roughly 40 individuals from public agencies and private organizations across the State, including parents as required by the FOA. The full planning committee was divided into subgroups aligning interest/expertise with the five Activities in the FOA. GOECD elected one staff member to lead each of the five Activities. Activity Leads engaged their subgroups in the information gathering stages of the application process. The committee's work then culminated, and State staff wrote the proposal.

Q: Does the grant allow for the creation and expansion of early childhood programs/classrooms, slots, much like the current PDG?

A: No creation or expansion of early childhood programs/classrooms/slots is allowed as part of the PDG B-5 Initial Grant.

Q: Will there be an opportunity for funding to support the development of physical spaces (i.e. classrooms) for children?

A: No development of physical spaces (i.e. classrooms) for children is allowed as part of the PDG B-5 Initial Grant.

Q: If Illinois is awarded, how will stakeholders be engaged?

A: Community, family, and provider voice is key in next steps moving forward. GOECD outlined stakeholder engagement in each of the five Activities in the proposal. Individuals can also become involved through the Early Learning Council, as well as through its committees and subcommittees.

Q: What if an idea I proposed to the planning committee was not included in the proposal?

A: The final proposal consists of ideas that met the requirements of the FOA, fit into the one-year time limit, and were consistent with the State's vision for early childhood systems development.

Q: Is there a summary available of the ideas proposed in Illinois' application?

A: [Project Summary/Abstract](#)

The PDG B-5 will allow Illinois to develop an overarching statewide strategic plan, informed by a needs assessment, which will guide systemic efforts to meet our project's goal to coordinate Illinois' mixed delivery system so that all children and families have access to the services they need to thrive. Illinois will engage with its leadership, partners, and stakeholders, including families, throughout this process.

In conducting the needs assessment, we will coordinate outreach to stakeholders, inventory and analyze existing statewide needs assessments, document data and research gaps, develop a set of research plans, complete statewide cost modeling, and expand the scope of our existing unduplicated count of children B-5 in early childhood care and education (ECCE) programs.

In developing the strategic plan, we will update the existing strategic framework of our Early Learning Council (ELC), inventory existing strategic plans, and mine those plans for aligned goals and objectives. We will also conduct focused planning to align our governance, expand coordinated intake, and increase access at the community level for children with special needs and children in the child welfare system. These plans will be assembled into one comprehensive and integrated statewide strategic plan.

Illinois will also conduct activities designed to maximize parental choice and knowledge. In order to increase parents' ability to make informed decisions about their children's care and education, we will formalize the establishment of family representation on the ELC, develop and conduct Community Cafés to engage and support parents in their children's development,

increase supports for families of children with disabilities, and update public-facing websites to better respond to the needs of families.

Illinois will share best practices with the field by engaging community voice in policy and program design through a Community Systems Portal, enhancing trainings for Family, Friend, and Neighbor providers who predominantly serve children B-3, training home visitors on the evidence-based Parents Interacting With Infants framework, and creating a database to facilitate cross-system use of early childhood mental health consultation.

Illinois will improve the overall quality of ECCE by supporting site-based Continuous Quality Improvement of infant/toddler programs, work through barriers to pathways for ECCE career advancement, and work toward a budgeting and monitoring system for layered funding. *Expected outcomes for year one:* a) an increase in the number of communities participating in coordinated outreach, enrollment, and intake; b) creation of a cross-systems plan for increased equitable access for target populations; and c) an increase in the number of providers engaged in evidence-based quality improvement. *Outcomes for years 2-4:* a) increased involvement by and engagement of parents/family members in the development and education of their children; b) children and families in targeted populations are represented equitably in ECCE programs across the mixed delivery system; and c) increased proportion of children and families in identified target populations will be served by high-quality programs.