

What You Need to Know about the New Preschool Development Grant B-5

The Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five (PDG B-5) is a new, \$250 million, competitive federal grant opportunity authorized under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) – all 56 states, territories and commonwealths (states) are eligible to apply. When ESSA became law in December of 2015, it authorized the creation of a new Preschool Development Grant (PDG) program, demonstrating a deliberate effort to foster connections across early learning programs and between the early learning and K-12 systems within states. Earlier this month, the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) [in coordination with the U.S. Department of Education (ED)], issued a funding forecast for the PDG B-5 – the most new information shared about the program to date. The funding forecast outlined important information regarding the grant opportunity, including an estimated “Synopsis Post Date” of August 14, 2018, at which time it full details of the grant opportunity will be available and states can begin to apply. Eligible candidates will have until October 15, 2018 to submit their applications.

The name “Preschool Development Grant” was previously used for similar, yet unrelated federal grants (Legacy PDG) created by the Obama administration and issued under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. However, the new PDG B-5 grants are an innovative bipartisan program created by Congress, and are distinct across purpose, eligibility, duration, matching requirements, use of funds and reporting requirements.

What is it for?

The PDG B-5 are designed to support improvements to States’ existing early childhood landscape by building upon existing Federal, State and local early care and learning investments.

PDG B-5: Includes the full range of programs, services and funding streams that support children birth through age five and their families.

Legacy PDG: Specifically dedicated to increase opportunities for four-year-olds.

Initial Grant Activities

PDG B-5: Year one of the PDG B-5 is intended to support optimization of existing ECE resources. Grantees would have the option of using funds for a number of activities, including:

1. Needs Assessment
2. Developing a Strategic Plan
3. Maximizing parent choice and knowledge about the State’s mixed delivery system of existing programs and providers
4. Sharing best practices among early childhood education program providers in the State to increase collaboration and efficiency of services, including to improve transitions from such programs to elementary school

5. Improving overall quality of early childhood education programs in the State, including by developing and implementing evidence-based practices to improve professional development for early childhood education providers and educational opportunities for children.

The PDG B-5 recognize the growing early childhood education investment from states in partnership with Federal support, and therefore prioritize improving the coordination and continuity of a comprehensive birth-through-five, mixed-delivery system. These improvement efforts can include new partnerships among Head Start providers, State and local governments, Indian tribes and tribal organizations, and faith- and community-based programs. Grantees are also encouraged to use the reporting information required under the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Act of 2014 to inform coordination and collaboration among programs and funding sources. To further leverage state and local investment, grantees will match 30 percent of their award with non-Federal dollars.

Legacy PDG: The first year of the Legacy PDGs supported building State capacity to develop, enhance, or expand high-quality preschool programs. The Legacy PDGs funded two tiers of activities depending on the State's existing early learning system. States in the early stages of building capacity for high-quality preschool programs could be awarded Development grants, whereas states further along in implementing quality programs were eligible for Expansion grants. Legacy PDG grantees were expected to demonstrate how they would increase the number and percentage of four-year-olds from families at or below 200 percent of the Federal poverty line enrolled in high-quality preschool programs.

Duration of the Initial Grant

PDG B-5: ACF intends to award 40 grants with a floor of \$500,000 and a ceiling of \$10 million. Subsequently, recipients of the PDG B-5 initial grants will have the opportunity to apply for renewal grants for up to three years.

Legacy PDG: Similar to the PDG B-5 grant for year one.

Who Can Apply?

PDG B-5: In addition to all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, the recent funding forecast for the PDG B-5 also names American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam and the United States Virgin Islands, which makes for a larger pool of eligible applicants than the legacy grants. Applicants who were not awarded legacy grants previously will be given priority, though legacy grantees are not precluded from applying for the new PDG B-5 opportunity.

Legacy PDG: All 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico were eligible applicants.

To read more about the latest news on the PDG B-5, visit www.ffyf.org