

# SUPPORT PRESCHOOL DEVELOPMENT GRANTS

## DEADLINE: MARCH 21ST COB

Dear Colleague:

We invite you to join us in requesting that the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education support at least \$400 million dollars in funding for the Preschool Development Grant program.

The Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five (PDG B-5) program, overseen by the Department of Education, seeks to increase access to high-quality early learning programs for our nation's young learners. Congress last appropriated \$250 million for this program under the Every Student Succeeds Act. The increase we request for fiscal year 2020, providing an additional \$150 million to the grant program, will ensure that the federal government continues to support state investments in early learning systems. With a growing school readiness gap between low-income and high-income families, it is important that we strengthen targeted, effective programs – like the PDG B-5 program – that cultivate readiness amongst underserved students.

Research shows the immense benefits of high-quality preschool, in both the short-term and long-term. Children who are enrolled have greater test scores, are less likely to repeat a grade, and are more likely to graduate from high school. Later in life, those enrolled are more likely to attend a four-year college, own a home, and less likely to commit crimes. In order to foster a globally competitive 21st century workforce and strengthen our communities, we must continue to invest in early childhood education.

We urge you to join us in sending the below letter, requesting this important funding for the PDG B-5 program. The deadline to cosign is March 21<sup>st</sup> COB. If you have questions or would like to cosign the letter, please contact Kaitlyn Montan in Congressman Castro's office at [Kaitlyn.Montan@mail.house.gov](mailto:Kaitlyn.Montan@mail.house.gov) or Tristan Southard in Congressman Katko's office at [Tristan.Southard@mail.house.gov](mailto:Tristan.Southard@mail.house.gov).

Sincerely,



Joaquin Castro  
Member of Congress



John Katko  
Member of Congress

March 8, 2019

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro  
Chairwoman  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and  
Human Services, and Education  
2413 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Tom Cole  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and  
Human Services, and Education  
2207 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairwoman DeLauro and Ranking Member Cole:

As the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee develops its Fiscal Year 2020 appropriations bill, we respectfully urge you to fund the Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five (PDG B-5) program at a level of at least \$400 million. We appreciate the Subcommittee's commitment to this program as demonstrated through its full funding in the FY18 and FY19 appropriations process and hope to build on its success in FY20.

We were pleased that Congress authorized PDG B-5 in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) at \$250 million per fiscal year (P.L. 114-95). The inclusion of PDG B-5 in ESSA marks the first time that Congress has dedicated specific funds to promote access to high-quality early childhood education as part of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). The PDG B-5 program affirms both the importance of early learning in advancing equal access to education and the central role of states in leading early childhood coordination and quality efforts. The program also represents a unique opportunity for the federal government to support state investments and initiatives as they consider how to best align and continue to grow their early learning systems.

To date, states have shown tremendous interest in the PDG B-5 program. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) initially expected to award a maximum of 40 grants in year-one, however, 47 states applied for PDG B-5 funding. Due to the overwhelming response, the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) awarded as many grants as possible with the allocated funding, which required states to significantly scale back their proposals. Ultimately, 46 states and territories received one-year planning grants that ranged from \$538,000 to \$10.6 million.

Governors from across the country are applauding these critical federal investments, and the comprehensive needs assessments and strategic plans, funded in year-one, are well underway in all 46 jurisdictions. Grantees will now have the opportunity to apply for implementation grants that will fund the execution of the strategic plans created during year-one. The implementation grants must be awarded by December 31, 2019 and HHS has indicated that due to the overwhelming participation, not all states will receive grants at the program's current funding level. Therefore, increased federal funding of this program is critical to ensure the 46 states and territories awarded planning grants can move forward with implementation.

We respectfully request the Subcommittee increase funding for the PDG B-5 program to at least \$400 million to allow the 46 grantees the opportunity to move forward in their development of comprehensive early learning systems.

Sincerely,