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The Impact of PDG B-5 Grants: State Progress & What's at Risk

The Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five (PDG B-5) program is a \$315 million competitive federal grant that supports states by building upon existing federal, state, and local early learning and care investments.

PDG B-5, which has a strong history of bipartisan support, helps states to strengthen, align, and expand early learning systems. Since 2018, 49 states, Washington, DC, and four territories have participated, and most have applied for multiple rounds of funding. In each award cycle, demand often exceeds available funding, with most eligible states applying but not all receiving awards. This sustained interest demonstrates both the program's value and the ongoing need for early childhood system-building investments. Future federal investment in PDG B-5 is essential for states and territories to build and maintain effective mixed-delivery early childhood systems that expand access to quality early learning and care for children and families.

In the fall of 2025, the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) surveyed states about their recent experience with PDG B-5. Key findings from NIEER's survey on the right-hand side.¹

NIEER asked states what activities they funded (entirely or in part) through a federal PDG B-5 Grant(s):



¹ This survey data was collected for NIEER's State of Preschool Yearbook, which provides an annual snapshot of state-funded preschool across the country. Forty-four states and the District of Columbia fund preschool programs and responded to questions about PDG B-5. (ID, NH, MT, SD, and WY did not receive the survey since they do not have state-funded preschool.)

Bright Spots

States shared accomplishments related to their PDG B-5 investments:²

ALABAMA

The PDG B-5 grant allowed the Alabama Department of Early Care and Education to pilot new programs and enhance funding for existing programs. One of the largest impacts was through the development of partnerships and supports for the workforce. This effort, in coordination with the Alabama Department of Labor, employers, and institutes of higher education, aims to support a career pipeline for early childhood staff members in all types of service delivery.

CALIFORNIA

The PDG B-5 grant allowed partners to identify the current number of children from birth to age five, where they reside compared to available programs, and where there are communities of high-need. This information will help guide decisions about where to expand services and focus outreach efforts to improve access in under-resourced communities.

MICHIGAN

The PDG B-5 grant funded professional development for family engagement, literacy development, and special education. The grant also allowed the state to pilot early educator wage enhancements, a benefits platform, and home-based pre-K. PDG B-5 also supported substitute pools and improved coordinated application, eligibility, and enrollment systems.

NEVADA

The PDG B-5 grant was used to enhance how families connect to services by launching the First 5 Nevada website and eligibility portal, which supports coordinated eligibility screenings and referrals across programs and improves family knowledge and choice within the mixed-delivery system. The grant also funded subgrants to directly improve the quality of existing programs, including implementation of the Nevada Pyramid Model to address continuous quality improvement in Tribal Head Start, Early Head Start, and rural school classrooms.

OKLAHOMA

The PDG B-5 grant is being used to expand implementation of the Pyramid Model across early care and education programs, provide professional development for educators, and support two early literacy initiatives: Dolly Parton Imagination Library and Reach Out and Read. The Dolly Parton Imagination Library provides free books to children ages 0-5 every month, and Reach Out and Read partners with pediatricians to provide children with free books during well-child visits.

TENNESSEE

The PDG B-5 grant has allowed Tennessee to support the professional development of early learning educators by offering a pathway to earning a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential at no cost. Subgrant and microgrant opportunities will soon be available to increase birth-to-age-5 slots, increase hours/days of service, and improve quality. The funds are allowing the state to update its internal data systems as well as create a resource hub for educators and families.

²Responses have been lightly edited for clarity and length.

PDG B-5 has been proposed for elimination in recent presidential budgets, but Congress has continued to fund the program and support new grant competitions and awards. States remain deeply concerned about losing this funding. **NIEER asked states which projects and activities would be canceled, modified, or otherwise disrupted if PDG B-5 funding were no longer available:**³

Workforce/Staffing/Compensation

ARIZONA

“A reduction in Arizona Department of Education staffing, that includes: early childhood education workforce specialists, early literacy specialists, and specialists dedicated to enhancing quality for young children with disabilities.”

HAWAII

“With the ending of PDG funding, Hawaii would have to halt statewide workforce compensation plans and minimize the expansion of the apprenticeship program. This would severely impact our ability to attract and retain early childhood educators, making it even harder to address the critical workforce shortage... Other vital workforce supports, such as the stipends for early childhood educators across the mixed-delivery system, would also disappear.”

NORTH CAROLINA

“If PDG funding ended it may have significant impacts on several early childhood services. The state’s ability to support specialized professional development and resources for educators...would be impacted. The continued professional growth of early childhood educators would be limited, potentially affecting the quality of care and instruction children receive.”

Enrollment/Access

ARIZONA

“...a reduction in the number of full-day high-quality subgrants, reduction in continuation for contracted program extension supports...”

DELAWARE

“If [PDG B-5] state funds are not available, funding for infant and toddler seats would end as Delaware Code currently reserves state early care and education funding for children 36 through 60 months, or older and not yet kindergarten age.”

HAWAII

“Subgrant initiatives that are currently expanding program capacity and access, particularly for infants and toddlers in underserved communities, would discontinue.”



³ Responses have been lightly edited for clarity and length.



Services/Quality Initiatives

MICHIGAN

“The following list of initiatives exist only because of PDG funds at this time and would be cancelled if PDG funds were discontinued or changed: ...Supports for earlier identification of reading difficulties; early childhood education substitute pools; connecting small business and economic development with child care businesses; supports for IDEA Part C and Part B, 619; social emotional health consultation; and family engagement.”

MINNESOTA

“If PDG funding ended, Minnesota would no longer be able to support the unifying framework for mixed-delivery coaching and technical assistance, leaving child care, Head Start, and other ECE programs without consistent quality improvement supports. The expansion of family engagement activities, including multilingual outreach and family advisory councils, would end, and the state could not continue to maintain and update more than 400 child care training courses, develop new content, or provide Training of Trainers events.”

WASHINGTON

“The Early Learning Coordination Plan Network, which consists of organizations, partners, and lived experts committed to advancing the goals and strategies of our state’s early learning strategic plan would be discontinued without additional PDG funding. Focused work to expand connections between Help Me Grow and state agencies, efforts to expand Early Connections Play and Learn, better support Early Childhood providers, and supports to expand Washington Pyramid Model and Trauma-Informed Care initiatives would also be disrupted.”

Systems Development

OKLAHOMA

“If PDG funding is discontinued it will be difficult to fund system improvements, as PDG is for system development. The gains we’ve made in Pyramid Model implementation would be difficult to sustain, as would any professional development across the system. Additionally, progress on data systems (coordinated application and enrollment) would be possibly stalled.”

MINNESOTA

“The modernization of the state’s early childhood integrated data system would not be able to move forward, reducing access to integrated data analytics about early childhood.”

NORTH CAROLINA

“If PDG funding ended...the formative assessment tool for NC Pre-K teachers would be at risk. A formative assessment tool is vital for systematically collecting data on child outcomes. Its loss would hinder the state’s ability to accurately measure the progress of preschool children, making it difficult to demonstrate the effectiveness of programs and identify areas for improvement...”

PDG B-5 grants support state efforts to enhance program quality, expand access, and increase efficiency through better collaboration and coordination.



PDG B-5 is an essential, yet lesser-known, program that fills vital gaps in state early childhood systems. The program has supported investments in quality improvement, family engagement and choice, coordinated mixed-delivery models, and workforce recruitment, retention, and professional development. Without this dedicated federal funding, states would struggle to sustain the collaboration, planning, and modernization efforts necessary to support young children and their families.

In December of 2025, after NIEER conducted its survey, the Administration for Children and Families at the Department of Health and Human Services held a new competition for PDG B-5 Systems-Building Grants. Twenty-three states received awards and will be working on implementation through FY 2026. Also in FY 2026, 10 states and D.C. will finish year three of a three-year grant cycle. These new and continuing awards provide states with ongoing opportunities to strengthen cross-sector collaboration and further develop more coordinated early childhood systems.

For more information about NIEER's research, including the State of Preschool Yearbook, please contact:

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