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## **Partnering with the State on the PreK Development Expansion Grant (PDEG)**

### **Subgrantees and Funding**

If you partner with the State on the PreK Expansion grant, you will be a subgrantee. Supervisory Unions, Supervisory Districts and the seven regional Head Start Programs can be subgrantees.

Funding will flow directly from the State to Supervisory Unions or Supervisory Districts, to then be distributed among any school-based and/or private partnerships that will be serving eligible children within each Supervisory Union or Supervisory District. Funding will also flow directly from the State to the seven Head Start programs and then may be distributed among school-based and/or private partnerships.

### **Child Eligibility**

The only eligible children that can be served with this money are four-year-olds at or below 200% of the [Federal Poverty Line](#). \*Please note that you should double the Poverty Guideline to show 200%.

### **Use of Federal Dollars**

All PreK slots funded through this grant must be full-day and high-quality, and serve four-year-olds at or below 200% of poverty.

Subgrantees will receive federal dollars directly from the State to do the following:

- Use the funds to expand PreK slots for four-year-olds at or below 200% of the poverty level from part-time for full-time;
- Use the funds to help you reach all of the quality criteria listed in the grant that your programs do not already meet (the full list of quality criteria is below).

The State and Subgrantees are not permitted to use these funds to supplant existing services for preschool-aged children including, if applicable, State Preschool Programs and programs and services supported through Title I of the ESEA, part C and section 619 of part B of IDEA, subtitle VII- B of the McKinney-Vento Act, the Head Start Act, Child Nutrition, and the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act. All other PreK funding sources must be exhausted before PDEG funds can be used. PDEG funds must be pro-rated and can only be expended on specific high-quality PreK program criteria.

## Eligible Expenditures

PDEG funds must be pro-rated and can only be expended on specific high quality criteria, listed in “eligible expenditures” below.

Funds that are provided to Subgrantees to implement and sustain High-Quality Preschool Programs must be used for the direct provision of High-Quality Preschool Programs for Eligible Children, and may include the following operational costs:

- staff salaries and benefits
- instructional supplies
- food (for local purposes, including holding community dinners for family engagement)
- building operations and maintenance
- in-service training and professional development
- individualized accommodations and supports for Eligible Children with Disabilities
- Comprehensive Services
- Program administration.

Funds, including any matching funds, **cannot** be used for construction, renovation, modernization, or other facilities-related activities. However, construction does not include “minor remodeling” as defined in 34 CFR 77.1(c). Under that definition, “minor remodeling” means, in general, minor alterations to a previously completed building. “Minor remodeling” does not include building maintenance and repairs and is an allowable expenditure to the extent it is necessary and reasonable for grant purposes, e.g. to ensure safe and appropriate environments for preschoolers. Some examples include fencing around playgrounds, playground improvements, and bathroom improvements.

## Proration

Grant funds can only be used for four-year-olds at or below 200% of poverty.

Any expense (supplies, teacher salaries, rent, etc.) must be pro-rated based on the number of eligible children in the program and the number of hours in the school day paid with PDEG funds. An exception to proration would include trainings and travel specifically for the child as well as Mental Health services.

## Budget considerations: teacher retirement

As you build your budgets, be sure to include the 13.58% of the base teacher salary for the VT teacher retirement system for any teacher paid by this grant.

## Eligibility Form

When enrolling students in grant-funded classrooms, use the eligibility sheet/form. We will only ask for this one time a year, upon enrollment, so it will be a snapshot to determine the amount of eligible kids in your program that we will use for the entire year.

## Carry-over

Subgrantees may **not** carryover funds from year to year. Money not utilized will be reallocated across grants the following year. However, if “cash on hand” is remaining, it will just go up against the cash for the following year.

## Child Care Subsidy (CCFAP) Information

CCFAP children participating in a PreK Expansion Grant slot should be handled like Afterschool (AS) children. For AS kids, the program has a Part Time (PT) rate that we pay while school is in session (the 35 weeks) and a Full Time (FT) rate we pay for school vacations and summer months that the child is enrolled.

## Elements of a High-Quality PreK Program

You must meet all of the 12 following elements of a high-quality program, and can use the federal dollars to help you meet these criteria:

Elements	Required Program Criteria
High-level Staff Qualifications	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1) Comply with the licensure rules of Universal PreK (Act166):<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>A. Public School-Operated PreK Programs: Every Classroom must have a licensed ECE or ECSE teacher.</li><li>B. Private Center Based PreK Programs: At least one licensed ECE or ECSE teacher must be present during the PreK program</li></ol></li><li>2) Comply with federal grant criteria- One teacher in each classroom of 20 or fewer children served through this grant program must meet the following high staff qualifications:<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>A. Have a bachelor’s degree in ECE or ECSE <b>or</b></li><li>B. Have a bachelor’s degree in any field with a State approved alternate pathway for acquiring knowledge and competency in early childhood education, which may include course work, clinical practice, and evidence of knowledge of content and pedagogy relating to early childhood, as well as teaching assistants that meet State or local requirements.</li></ol></li><li>3) The second staff person on the classroom is required to, at a minimum meet the qualifications for an instructional assistant or classroom, aide as set out in State or local requirements.</li><li>4) If you have a “highly qualified” teacher without a license in the classroom, they must be on track to receive their license within the four-year grant period.</li></ol>

Elements	Required Program Criteria
Curriculum	Programs must implement developmentally, culturally, and linguistically responsive and appropriate evidence-based curricula and learning environments aligned with the Vermont Early Learning Standards.
Full Day Program	All programs must provide a minimum of 5 hours per day of Pre-K class time or be equivalent to the school day; 180 days.
Class Size	Class sizes must not exceed 20 children.
Child-Staff Ratios	<p>Child- Staff ratios must not exceed 10:1 and have no more than 20 children with 2 adults. The referenced 2 adults will be at least:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) An appropriately certified and licensed teacher, and</li> <li>2.) An appropriately certified teaching assistant.</li> </ol>
Program Evaluation For Continuous Improvement	Programs must participate in Teaching Strategies Gold which is the state’s formative assessment under Universal PreK to show continuous improvement. Program quality can also be assessed by a valid and reliable assessor using the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale, Third Edition (ECERS-3) and/or the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS).
Comparable and Equitable Educator Salaries	In district teachers should be compensated with salaries and benefits that are the same as other teachers in the school district. Teachers in provider settings should receive a comparable compensation.
Comprehensive Services	<p>Programs must demonstrate coordination with existing community services through collaborative and cooperative efforts which include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Screenings for hearing, vision, dental, health (including mental health) and development, as well as appropriate referrals;</li> <li>• Responsive family engagement opportunities;</li> <li>• Nutrition services;</li> <li>• Coordinated IDEA, Part B, Section 619 services;</li> <li>• Physical activity services; and</li> <li>• Identify additional community and support services as appropriate (such as income supports, food pantries, housing, and social services).</li> </ul> <p>Head Start has a long history of family engagement and has developed many national resources, which can be found <a href="#">here</a>. The <a href="#">Toolkit of Resources for Engaging Parents and Community as Partners in Education</a> is another helpful resource.</p>

Elements	Required Program Criteria
Evidence-based health and safety standards	
Inclusion of children with disabilities	Inclusion of children with disabilities to ensure access to and full participation in all opportunities; See Policy Statement of Children with Disabilities in Early Childhood Programs to guide efforts in improving inclusive practices;
Individualized accommodations and supports for all children	Individualized accommodations and supports so that all children can access and participate fully in learning activities; See Policy Statement on Supporting the Development of Children Who Are Dual Language Learners in Early Childhood Programs; See Policy Statement on Expulsion and Suspension in Early Childhood Programs