MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION
EQUITY AND EXCELLENCE

GRANT INFORMATION GUIDE

Early Head Start - Child Care Partnerships Quality Enhancement Grant Fiscal Year 2024

Maryland State Department of Education
200 West Baltimore Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21201

Deadline
August 31, 2023
No later than 5:00 p.m. EDT

MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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Program Description

The Early Head Start–Child Care Partnership Quality Enhancement grant opportunity is designed to support Maryland's Early Head Start–Child Care Partnership grantees to strengthen and sustain high-quality learning environments for infants and toddlers in low-income families. The Early Head Start – Child Care Partnership (EHS-CCP) supports the growth, development and readiness of infants and toddlers by providing comprehensive services and key resources to promote early learning, improved progress in children's school readiness, and a smooth transition to Head Start or another preschool environment. EHS-CCP programs offer resources to parents and family members to foster a positive learning environment and enhance child and family well-being.

The Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership brings together the best of Early Head Start and child care by providing comprehensive and continuous services and quality improvement. The EHS-CCP Quality Enhancement grant, administered by the Division of Early Childhood at the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), provides funding for existing Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership programs to improve the quality of the learning environment, enhance social-emotional and mental health supports and services for children and families, and offer professional development supports for both Early Head Start and Child Care staff.

The Blueprint for Maryland's Future (Blueprint) seeks to significantly increase investment in high-quality early childhood education so that all children can begin kindergarten ready to learn. The EHS-CCP Quality Enhancement grant supports Blueprint's strategy toward requiring providers receiving public funding to meet rigorous quality standards.

Authorization

Head Start Act, as amended., U.S. Code Citation: 42 USC § 9831 et seq.

Child Care and Development Block Grant, U.S. Code Citation: 42 USC § 9857 et seq.

GRANT OVERVIEW

Name of Grant

Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership Quality Enhancement Grant

Purpose

To support the Maryland's Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership grantees in strengthening, sustaining, and improving the learning environment, social-emotional and mental health supports, and professional development supports for staff.

Dissemination

This Grant Information Guide (GIG) was released on June 29, 2023.

Deadline

Proposals are due no later than 5:00 p.m. EST on August 31, 2023.

Grant Period

July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024

Total Funding Amount

There is $750,000.00 in available funding.

Estimated Number of Grants

Four (4), grant awards may be issued. The grant awards will be based on the number of submissions and availability of funds. MSDE may consider prior applicant performance when making awards.

Submission Instructions

The Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership Quality Improvement Grant application can be downloaded from the MSDE grants page. A signed electronic copy in PDF format must be submitted by email to vanessa.jones1@maryland.gov no later than 5 p.m. EST on August 31, 2023.

Eligibility

This funding opportunity is open to current Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership programs. Applicants must demonstrate current federal Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership funding status as a grantee or delegate. This is not a competitive grant; however, all applicants must meet all program requirements to receive grant funds.

All Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership programs funded under this program must be participating in the Maryland EXCELS program.

Program Contact

Vanessa Jones
Early Childhood Program Specialist
Division of Early Childhood
vanessa.jones1@maryland.gov
410-767-0602

State Responsibilities

MSDE will review all grant applications for eligibility and award funding based on the review criteria outlined in the Grant Information Guide. In addition to meeting the eligibility requirements, proposals will be evaluated based on demonstrated experience and the potential impact of the program, the feasibility of the proposed activities, and the capacity of the applicant to successfully implement the program.

Once the grants are awarded, MSDE will provide ongoing support and guidance, including technical assistance, performance monitoring, and reporting requirements. MSDE will monitor grantee progress through project updates, financial reports, and on-site or virtual monitoring.

Use of Funds

Approved program expenses will be reimbursed upon submission and approval of an invoice with supporting documentation (i.e., receipts, purchase orders, time/effort report, etc.).

Funds may be used for:

- Classroom supplies and materials to enhance curriculum implementation.

- Social-emotional and mental health services and support for children and families.

- Professional development and learning for teachers and staff.

- Increased staffing to meet the required staff-child ratio and group size requirements.

- These funds must directly benefit EHS-CCP enrolled children but are also expected to benefit other children sharing a classroom or service environment with enrolled children.

Funds may not be used for:

- Supplanting existing services.

- Construction of temporary or permanent structures.

- Food or meals.

- Equipment for administrative purposes.

- Renting or maintaining building space.

- Cost(s) incurred before the approval of the grant.

Application Requirements

COVER PAGE

Applicants must complete the Cover Page provided in the application for participation. The cover page includes all contact information, the total amount of funding being requested and the organization's Employer Identification Number (EIN) and Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number. The cover page should not contain any graphics or additional information and must be signed by the Head of Agency.

PROJECT ABSTRACT

In the Project Abstract, the applicant will introduce the program and project to the reader. It should be factual, brief, and focused on the organization's efforts. Do not assume the reader is familiar with the proposed project. The project abstract should cover the core aspects of the project, such as the population served, brief description of the goals, strategies to meet them, and how the program intends to strengthen, sustain, and improve the Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership program.

PROJECT NARRATIVE

The project narrative consists of the following sections which will be scored by reviewers.

- Extent of Need and Evidence of Impact

- Program Information and Enrollment

- Goals, Measurable Outcomes, and Milestones

- Plan of Operation, Key Personnel, and Project Timeline

- Evaluation and Dissemination Plan

EXTENT OF NEED AND EVIDENCE OF IMPACT

Describe the needs this project is designed to address and how it will strengthen the Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership, improve and sustain a high-quality learning environment and enhance child-family well-being. Document current or past efforts to address the need and show how those efforts addressed the need. Include relevant baseline data that support the identified needs. Also, discuss the applicant's experience in implementing evidence-based strategies that lead to the desired impact of the proposed plan. Conduct a program and staff needs assessment to assist in identifying strengths and areas of improvement.

PROGRAM INFORMATION AND ENROLLMENT

Applicants must provide site names, the Maryland EXCELS rating, and the projected number of children served through the EHS-CCP.

EHS-CCP Name and Address	License #	Maryland EXCELS Quality Rating	Number of Classrooms	Number of Classroom Staff
ABC Child Care 1300 Child First Parkway Toy Land, MD 21111	708673	3	4	10

GOALS, MEASURABLE OUTCOMES, AND MILESTONES

Applicants must set clear and specific program goals with measurable outcomes, and defined milestones. Goals and outcomes are expected to build on identified needs and address solutions to them. If not at Maryland EXCELS level 5, at least one goal should be geared towards plans to move up a level in Maryland EXCELS. All goals and outcomes should be aligned with the early childhood systems 5-year strategic plan, Maryland Ready: A Path to School Readiness and Success:

- Strengthen availability and access by increasing availability and choice for all families, especially vulnerable families, decreasing barriers, serving more children with disabilities in inclusive settings, and improving coordination between ECE and health services.

- Improve and support program quality by increasing quality across sectors, focusing on equity, increasing kindergarten readiness for all children, and improving capacity to meet infants' and children's mental health needs.

- Deepen family engagement by increasing families' awareness of high-quality programs, expanding two-generational programming, and enhancing families' opportunities to engage.

- Ensure successful transition experience by strengthening institutional support for transitions, supporting families through transitions, and improving transition-focused professional development opportunities.

- Expand and enhance workforce development by improving professional development opportunities, strengthening equity, improving coordination and alignment efforts, and increasing compensation for ECE professionals.

- Improve systems for infrastructure, data and resource management by improving coordination across agencies, modernizing the data system, using resources in ways that promote equity, and streamlining funding mechanisms.

PLAN OF OPERATION, KEY PERSONNEL, AND PROJECT TIMELINE

Plan of Operation

Describe the strategies and activities that will be implemented to achieve your goals, outcomes and milestones. Justify why the strategies were chosen and how they will help to achieve the outcomes. How will grant funds support these strategies? Identify the target population and explain how they will be affected by the proposed plan. List all major key personnel actions necessary to implement the project during the funding cycle. Indicate the key personnel responsible for accomplishing each action and the estimated timeline for completion.

Key Personnel

Applicants are required to include a list of the staff or personnel responsible for the successful implementation and monitoring of the grant requirements. The list should include an individual's name, title, organization if different than applicant, and the specific role(s) the individual has in the implementation of the grant.

Person Responsible	Title, Organization	Responsibilities	Time Devoted
Sara Smith	Director/Grant Manager	Ensure goals and objectives are met. Ensure fiscal reports are completed and submitted within the identified timeline.	.25 FTE
Jesse Cook	Lead Teacher	Conduct child screening and assessment. Plan and implement developmentally appropriate academic plans for each child. Ensures the health and safety of the classroom.	1.0 FTE

Project Timeline

The Project Timeline tells the reader when key activities will take place during the grant period. Applicants should consider all the key tasks or activities that need to be carried out to implement the program successfully, whether each task can realistically begin and end in the proposed time frame, and how long each task will take to complete. It should contain three sections: management, implementation, and evaluation. See a sample timeline below:

Proposed Activities	Individual Responsible	Date of Implementation
Management Activity		
Select Summer Teaching Staff	Director Human Resources	April 1, 2024 – May 31, 2024
Implementation Activity		
Conduct baseline child assessment for each child	Lead Teacher	June 22,2024 or at enrollment
Evaluation Activity		
Analyze child data and create final report	Education Manager	August 10, 2024 – September 10, 2024

EVALUATION AND DISSEMINATION PLAN

Applicants should discuss the ways in which progress towards stated goals and outcomes will be measured over the course of the grant. It is important to note that grantees are required to submit an annual evaluation report and interim progress reports, which should integrate any collected data that are consistent with the project's goals and objective(s). Keep in mind the final evaluation will consider the entire project, beginning to end. Reports are intended to be an integral element in the project's planning, design, and implementation and should be reflective in nature, discussing progress towards outcomes and what additional steps may be needed to achieve goals. Applicants must also discuss how data, findings, and reports will be made available to pertinent community stakeholders.

BUDGET AND BUDGET NARRATIVE

The project's budget should detail all related project expenses in a separate itemized budget. It should demonstrate the extent to which the budget is reasonable, cost-effective, and integrates other sources of funding. All costs described in the project narrative should appear in the budget narrative and must have a corresponding entry in the itemized budget for that year. Reviewers should be able to see a clear connection between the project activities and the budget line items.

Each line must be detailed and specific. General expenses should be broken down into specific line items. There is no page limit for the budget, so be as detailed as possible.

Salaries & wages (list separately for each position)

Line item	Calculation	Requested	Total
Mentor/Coach	$25/hr. x 40 hrs. per week x 52 weeks	$52,000	$52,000
Total for salaries & wages:		$52,000	$52,000

Contracted Services

Line item	Calculation	Requested	Total
Teaching Strategies Training – Creative Curriculum for Infants, Toddlers and Twos	$56.00 per person x 10 people	$560	$560
Total for contracted services:		$560	$560

Appendices

The following appendices must be included but not apply to the page limit of the Project Narrative. Include other appendices as deemed necessary.

Appendix A: Evidence of participation in the Maryland EXCELS program.

Appendix B: Current federal Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership funding compliance status as a grantee or delegate.

Appendix C: Program and Staff Needs Assessment.

Appendix D: Signed Partnership Agreement.

Appendix E: A signed C-1-25 MSDE budget form

Appendix F: A signed recipient assurances page

Appendix G: Letters of support from any partners (if applicable)

Scoring Rubric

Areas	Level 3 Exceeds Criteria	Level 2 Meets Criteria	Level 1 Does Not Meet Criteria
Extent of Need and Evidence of Impact	The applicant has provided a comprehensive and well-supported description of the challenges to be addressed and how this grant will support and strengthen the EHS-CCP program. The Extent of Need discusses the results of the program and staff needs assessment and demonstrates how needs inform goals and outcomes. The applicant has demonstrated robust evidence of experience and success implementing proposed programming. The applicant discussed past and present efforts to address the need, including critical evaluation of the effectiveness of those efforts. The applicant provided evidence from multiple data sources and relevant baseline data to support the need for EHS-CCP grant programs.	The applicant has provided a description of the challenges to be addressed and how this grant will strengthen the EHS-CCP program. The Extent of Need discusses the program and staff needs assessment and demonstrates how needs inform goals and outcomes. The applicant has demonstrated some experience implementing proposed programming. The applicant discussed past and present efforts to address the need. The applicant has provided evidence from multiple data sources.	The applicant has not provided an extent of need that clearly identifies the challenges to be addressed or how the grant will strengthen the EHS-CCP program. The Extent of Need does not discuss the program and staff needs assessment or demonstrates how needs inform goals and outcomes. The applicant has not demonstrated experience implementing the proposed programming. The applicant has not discussed past and present efforts to address the need.

Areas	Level 3 Exceeds Criteria	Level 2 Meets Criteria	Level 1 Does Not Meet Criteria
Goals, Measurable Outcomes, and Milestones	The applicant has provided clear and measurable goals and outcomes that align with the Extent of Need and demonstrates alignment with the early childhood systems 5-year strategic plan. Each goal statement has a measurable outcome and milestones to be accomplished. The applicant has identified if a program is not at Maryland EXCELS level 5 and provided at least one goal to address plans to move up a level in Maryland EXCELS. The applicant has established detailed, ambitious, and measurable milestones to track progress throughout the year and has included a plan for regular monitoring and evaluation of progress toward the goals and outcomes. The goals, outcomes, and milestones are well-aligned with the needs and demonstrate a clear and strategic approach to addressing the identified needs.	The applicant has provided goals and outcomes that align with the Extent of Need and demonstrates alignment with the early childhood systems 5-year strategic plan. Each goal statement has identified objectives and outcomes to be accomplished. The applicant has identified if a program is not at Maryland EXCELS level 5 and provided at least one goal to address plans to move up a level in Maryland EXCELS. The applicant has established some milestones to track progress throughout the year and has included a plan for monitoring. The goals, outcomes and milestones are aligned with the needs and demonstrate an approach to addressing the identified problem.	The applicant has not provided clear and measurable goals and outcomes that align with the Extent of Need and demonstrates alignment with the early childhood systems 5-year strategic plan. The applicant has not identified the program's Maryland EXCELS level or a plan to move up a level. The goals, outcomes, and milestones are not aligned with the needs or demonstrate an approach to addressing identified problems.

Areas	Level 3 Exceeds Criteria	Level 2 Meets Criteria	Level 1 Does Not Meet Criteria
Plan of Operation, Key Personnel, and Project Timeline	The applicant has provided a comprehensive and well-supported plan of operation that clearly lists all major actions necessary to implement the proposed project to strengthen, sustain, and improve the Early Head Start – Child Care Partnership program. The strategies and activities are closely aligned with the program's goals, outcomes, milestones and are chosen based on their potential benefit towards program and staff needs. The target population is clearly identified and the program's potential impact. The applicant has provided a list of all staff or personnel and assigned responsibilities for the successful implementation and monitoring of the grant requirements. Each activity is assigned to a specific team member. The project timeline clearly identifies the key activities and timeframe	The applicant has provided a plan of operation that lists major actions necessary to implement the proposed project. Strategies and activities are provided. The target population is identified and the program's potential impact. The applicant has provided a list of staff or personnel responsible for the implementation of the grant requirements. Each activity is assigned to a team member. A project timeline is provided.	The applicant has not provided a clear or comprehensive plan of operation that lists the major actions necessary to implement the proposed project. The strategies and activities are not closely aligned with the program's goals, outcomes, or milestones, or are chosen based on their potential benefit towards program and staff needs. The target population is not clearly identified, or the program's potential impact is not well-articulated. The applicant has not provided a list of all staff or personnel and assigned responsibilities. Each activity is not assigned to a specific team member. The project timeline is not provided.

Areas	Level 3 Exceeds Criteria	Level 2 Meets Criteria	Level 1 Does Not Meet Criteria
	for accomplishing each action.		
Evaluation and Dissemination	The applicant has provided a detailed and well-planned evaluation and dissemination plan that includes annual evaluation reports and quarterly progress reports that are consistent with the project's goals and outcomes. The evaluation plan is designed to assess the entire project, beginning to end, and is an integral element in the project's planning, design, and implementation. The applicant has provided a clear and effective ongoing plan to evaluate milestones on a quarterly basis, which will assist program leadership in making informed decisions to support continuous improvement. The dissemination plan is well developed and includes strategies for sharing the program's successes, challenges, and lessons learned with stakeholders both within and outside the organization.	The applicant has provided a plan for annual evaluation reports and quarterly progress reports that are consistent with the project's goals and outcomes. The evaluation plan is designed to assess the project as a whole and is seen as an important part of the project's planning, design, and implementation. The applicant has provided some plan for evaluating milestones on a quarterly basis, which will assist program leadership in making informed decisions to support continuous improvement. The dissemination plan includes some strategies for sharing the program's successes, challenges, and lessons learned with stakeholders both within and outside the organization.	The applicant has not provided a clear or well-developed evaluation and dissemination plan for the project. The evaluation plan is not designed to assess the project as a whole or is not seen as an integral part of the project's planning, design, and implementation. The applicant has not provided a clear plan for evaluating milestones on a quarterly basis or has not explained how this plan will assist program leadership in making informed decisions to support continuous improvement. The dissemination plan is not well-developed or does not include strategies for sharing the program's successes, challenges, and lessons learned with stakeholders both within and outside of the organization.

Areas	Level 3 Exceeds Criteria	Level 2 Meets Criteria	Level 1 Does Not Meet Criteria
Budget and Budget Narrative	All requirements listed under meets criteria are met. In addition, the budget includes sufficient resources for the successful execution of the proposed program.	The budget reflects all program activities and justification is provided for all expenses. The costs are reasonable and allowable. All line items contain the calculations used to derive the expected cost. There are no mathematical errors.	The budget does not reflect all program activities and justification for all expenses. There may be missing calculations and/or mathematical errors.

The Review Process

The review of proposals will be a three-part process:

1. Applications will be screened for submission requirements and inclusion of all required sections.

2. A review committee established by the MSDE will evaluate applications using the scoring rubric.

3. Final approval for awards will be determined by the review committee.

Award Notification

Notification of approval will be sent by email within 7 days of the deadline to submit proposals. Approved proposals may begin implementation as soon as the award notification letter is received. The Notice of Grant Award (NOGA), invoicing instructions, and invoice template will be forthcoming within 3 weeks of the approval letter.

Grant Awards

MSDE will use uniform standards to impose specific or "high-risk" conditions on applicants selected for funding and may impose additional award conditions, as needed. Grant amounts will be funded contingent on the availability of funding and satisfactory performance. Awards may be reduced based on the grantee's inability to meet the goals and performance measures set forth in this grant. Awards may also be reduced based on fiscal or programmatic concerns or findings during the grant period. Any award reductions will be discussed with the grantee in advance of the reduction. MSDE reserves the right to discontinue funding for non-compliance of grant requirements.

Reporting Requirements

Grantees must comply with the following reporting requirements:

Date	Reporting requirements for each year
Ongoing	Fiscal and program monitoring; all invoices must be accompanied by supporting documentation
December 15, 2023	1st Interim Progress Report (MSDE C-1-25-C) which covers the period of July 1, 2023 – November 30, 2023
May 15, 2024	2nd Interim Progress Report (MSDE C-1-25-C) which covers the period of December 1, 2023 – April 30, 2024
June 30, 2024	Grant Period Ends
August 30, 2024	Final Invoice and Final Progress Report due covering the grant period May 1, 2024 – June 30, 2024 (MSDE C-1-25-D) can be found on the MSDE grants webpage). Final Evaluation Report (Narrative and Fiscal) covering the grant year.

Notes:

Any requests for programmatic amendments must be submitted at least 45 days before the grant period ends, and must be submitted using the C-1-25-B form found in the Grant Budget Forms Workbook on the MSDE grants webpage.

Grant Application Timeline

This funding opportunity, including all attachments and updates, are found on the MSDE website.

Date	Program Milestone
June 29, 2023	The Grant Information Guide and the application are released
July 5. 2023 July 7, 2023 July 11, 2023	MSDE will hold virtual customer service session to answer questions and provide customer service and support
August 22, 2023	The grant application period closes – Application and all attachments are due to MSDE
August 23, 2023	The MSDE Review Committee will convene and evaluate completed applications
August 29, 2023	MSDE will notify applicants of the award status
July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024	The grant period

Non-Discrimination Statement

The Maryland State Department of Education does not discriminate on the basis of age, ancestry/national origin, color, disability, gender identity/expression, marital status, race, religion, sex, or sexual orientation in matters affecting employment or in providing access to programs and activities and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. For inquiries related to Department policy, please contact:

Equity Assurance and Compliance Office
Office of the Deputy State Superintendent for Operations

Maryland State Department of Education
200 W. Baltimore Street - 2nd Floor Baltimore,
Maryland 21201-2595

410-767-0123 - voice
410-767-0431 - fax
410-333-6442 - TTY/TDD

The General Education Provisions Act (GEPA), Section 427

Each application must develop and describe the steps the applicant proposes to take to ensure equitable access to, and equitable participation in, the project or activity to be conducted with such assistance, by addressing the special needs of students, teachers, and other program beneficiaries to overcome barriers to equitable participation.

Customer Service Support Sessions

The MSDE will hold three customer service support sessions. During these sessions, MSDE personnel will provide an overview of the grant requirements and answer questions about the grant. To attend a virtual session, please click on the hyperlink dates below:

Wednesday, July 5, 2023
10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.
Video Call Link: https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82813487407

Friday, July 7, 2023
2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.
Video Call Link: https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82813487407

Tuesday, July 11, 2023
11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
Video Call Link: https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82813487407

This funding opportunity, including all attachments and updates, can be downloaded from the MSDE Office of Grants Administration and Compliance website.

Questions

MSDE staff will also be available to provide technical assistance throughout the grant application process. If you have questions about the application or the process, please contact the Program Monitor:

Vanessa Jones
Early Childhood Program Specialist
Division of Early Childhood
vanessa.jones1@maryland.gov
410-767-0602

A list of frequently asked questions (FAQ) and answers will be posted to the Collaboration and Program Improvement page following customer service support sessions.

Attachments

Early Head Start – Child Care Partnership Quality Enhancement Application