



Maryland
STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



GRANT INFORMATION GUIDE

Prekindergarten Expansion Grant

Maryland State Department of Education

200 West Baltimore Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21201

Deadline

April 11, 2025
No later than 5:00 p.m. EDT

MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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Program Description

The Prekindergarten Expansion Grant is a competitive grant program administered by the Division of Early Childhood at the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE). It provides funding for local education agencies (LEAs) and private providers to administer high-quality prekindergarten and school readiness services throughout the State for children and their families in alignment with The Blueprint for Maryland's Future.

The Blueprint granted all three- and four-year-old children from families earning incomes at or below 300% Federal Poverty Level access to high-quality full-day Pre-K at no cost. The Prekindergarten Expansion Grant is part of Maryland's plan for expanding access to high-quality prekindergarten. The grant, previously funded through a combination of federal preschool grant funds and funds provided by the Maryland Prekindergarten Expansion Act of 2014, is now sustained through state funding as a result of the Blueprint.

AUTHORIZATION

[House Bill 1300/Chapter 36 \(2020\)](#), as amended [House Bill 1372/Chapter 55](#) – the Blueprint for Maryland's Future.

GRANT OVERVIEW

Name of Grant Program

Prekindergarten Expansion Grant

Purpose

Broaden availability and expand access to high-quality prekindergarten educational programming and school readiness services for three- year-old and four-year-old students from families with household incomes up to 300% of Federal Poverty Level (FPL).

Dissemination

This Grant Information Guide (GIG) was released on February 25, 2025.

Deadline

Proposals are due no later than 5 p.m. on April 11, 2025; however, MSDE will begin reviewing applications on a rolling basis starting March 5, 2025.

Grant Period

July 1, 2025-June 30, 2026

Funding Amount Available

\$26,644,000

Awards in the amount of \$400,000 (estimated average grant amount)

Estimated Number of Grants

Fifty (50)

Funding Per Slot

\$14,473 per full-day slot for three-year-olds and four-year-olds

Eligibility

This funding opportunity is designed for those who deliver prekindergarten services and are accredited and participate in the Maryland EXCELS program, including:

Local Education Agencies (LEAs) or qualified vendors (as defined in COMAR (13a.06.02) and private providers (including, Head Start, Center Based, and Family Child Care programs) who:

- hold a valid license.
- have not incurred any serious health or safety violations in the last year.
- are Head Start programs.

Priority will be given to programs with the following Maryland EXCELS ratings (in order of priority):

- Published at level 5 with a plan to maintain this level;
- Publish at level 4 with a plan to achieve level 5 within 5 years (if you fall into this criterion, you must include a plan to reach level 5 as part of your application); or
- Published at level 3 with a plan to achieve level 5 within 5 years (if you fall into this criterion, you must include a plan to reach level 5 as part of your application).

Priority will be given to high-quality programs that:

- are seeking renewal or expansion of existing programs with a demonstrable track record of success;
- are in areas of the State that have an unmet need for prekindergarten services; or
- include parental/guardian engagement and educational activities beyond the classroom.

The Prekindergarten Expansion Grant Program is a competitive grant opportunity. To expedite the award process and ensure grantees can move without interruption into the 2025-2026 school year, MSDE will review applications on a rolling basis beginning March 5, 2025. MSDE encourages timely submission to increase an applicant's likelihood of receiving an award.

Submission Instructions

Grant applications must be submitted electronically using Qualtrics by 5:00 p.m. April 11, 2025.

PROGRAM CONTACT

Dr. Nykia Washington

Prekindergarten and Mixed Delivery Program Manager

Division of Early Childhood

Phone: (410) 767-0088

Nykia.Washington@maryland.gov

State Responsibilities

MSDE is responsible for providing required information, data, documentation, and technical assistance to facilitate the grantee's performance of the work. MSDE program staff will be available and make every effort to support on demand additional assistance when requested throughout the grant period. In addition, MSDE will monitor program implementation throughout the grant performance period to ensure each council is on target to meet its goals and fully expend its awarded program resources.

Use of Funds

The following are examples of approved uses for the grant funds in accordance with the purpose of the grant. Other costs not listed here may be presented to the grant manager for determination of allowable expenditures.

Funds may be used for:

- Salaries, wages, and fringe benefits for teaching staff. Teachers with like qualifications are paid a salary that is commensurate with qualifications in alignment with the salaries and benefits of the LEA in which the early childhood program is located based on credentials and experience. Salaries will be reviewed prior to final approval. For a list of minimum teacher salaries for local education agencies in Maryland, see table 3 of the Professional Salary Schedules Maryland Public Schools.
- Equipment, materials, and supplies (e.g., classroom furniture, instructional materials including MSDE approved curriculum resources to support the Maryland Early Learning Standards, book supplies for family literacy or math activities).
- Tuition, however, the grant budget may not be directed to tuition only. Note: if the applicant is claiming tuition, the application must include a statement that details what the tuition covers.
- Reasonable rental costs are allowable and should be reviewed periodically. Contact the Prekindergarten Expansion Grant program contact for this grant program for specific conditions and requirements if property rental costs are included in the budget narrative.
- Technology costs (may not exceed 10% of the total fund request).
- Costs associated with maintaining Maryland or national accreditation status, or Maryland EXCELS rating.
- Costs for contracts to administer screening and intervention services for prekindergarten students.
- Costs associated with evaluation and monitoring of the project (may not exceed 5% of the total fund request).
- Indirect costs (may not exceed 10% of the total fund request).
- Costs for at least one meal per day for students that meets the CACFP meal pattern requirements.
- Costs for academic field trips.
- Costs associated with the provision of professional learning activities for instructional staff.

Funds may not be used for:

- Supplanting existing program funds.
- Capital improvements.
- Cost(s) incurred prior to the approval of the grant.

Grant funds must be used to provide an educational program designed to provide high-quality learning experiences for children in prekindergarten. These educational programs are led by qualified teaching staff and include curriculum that is evidence-based and aligned with the Maryland's birth-to-three-years early learning standards and Maryland College and Career Ready Standards, implementation of formative and summative assessments, and developmentally appropriate lesson plans aligned to the Standards. Maryland prekindergarten programs must have developmentally appropriate classrooms that are well-equipped to address the needs of all children, including those with disabilities, English and multilingual learners, and students experiencing homelessness. Programs are committed to ongoing program evaluation to ensure continuous quality improvement for the children and families they serve.

Coordination with Blueprint Funds to Local Education Agencies (LEA)

LEAs that receive Blueprint for Maryland's Future funds and Prekindergarten Expansion Grants in Fiscal Year 2026 will be expected to increase the number of three- and four-year-old children served in full-day prekindergarten as reported in the official September 30, 2024 enrollment count. For example, if the LEA received Blueprint funding in Fiscal Year 2026 for serving 100 three- and four-year-old children in full-day prekindergarten the prior year (2024-2025 school year) and is also awarded the Prekindergarten Expansion Grant to serve 40 three- and four-year-olds, the LEA must serve a minimum of 140 three- and four-year-olds in full-day prekindergarten in FY26. The September 30, 2025 (School Year 2025-2026) enrollment data submitted to MSDE must reflect this increase.

Special Considerations

For LEA applicants, local general education, English and multilingual learner education, and special education leadership are strongly encouraged to collaborate on the development of the grant proposal.

Combining multiple funding streams offers increased opportunities for the inclusion of children with an Extended Individualized Family Service Plan (Ext IFSP) or Individualized Education Program (IEP) for whom a regular early childhood program with typically developing peers has been determined by the child's Ext IFSP/IEP team to be the appropriate natural and least restrictive environment (LRE). The participation of children served through an Ext IFSP or an IEP in public prekindergarten programs provides access to the general early childhood education curriculum and instructional program, further supporting a narrowing of the school readiness performance gap with typically developing peers. Fully inclusive options have been shown to work for children across disability groups and levels of severity (children with developmental delays, mild to severe; children with autism spectrum disorder; children with multiple disabilities; children with significant social and emotional needs; children with hearing impairment; and children with limited mobility). Further, the Prekindergarten Expansion Grant Program also supports students who are experiencing homelessness and students who speak a home language other than English. In addition, [McKinney-Vento](#) funding can be used to support children experiencing homelessness in combination with these grant funds. For children who speak a language other than English, the Home Language Survey should be used when children are enrolled in either an LEA or within a private provider setting. Professional development should be offered to educators to support all of these populations.

Required Components

Proposals must contain the following to be considered for funding:

- Clear goals and outcomes that demonstrate how the program will provide an educational program and meet the requirements of the grant.
- A description of how the income verification forms and family-provided documents will be collected and maintained on-site. The income eligibility criteria are based on the [Federal Poverty Level \(FPL\)](#).
- A plan for how the needs of students with disabilities, students experiencing homelessness, and students who speak a home language other than English will be met.
- A description of the program's family engagement strategies in accordance with the [Maryland Early Childhood Family Engagement Framework](#).
- Verification of published Maryland EXCELS level with a plan in place to maintain or achieve level 5 by the identified deadline.
- A description of the professional learning activities for instructional staff (teacher and assistant) that consist of 15 total of hours and support school readiness, including alignment with the Maryland Early Learning Standards in early language and literacy, the science of reading, early mathematics and social foundations, and other topics that support instruction.
- Identified community and/or business partners and specific roles as they relate to the program.
- A qualified individual in Key Personnel listed as responsible for instructional oversight, and whose resume demonstrates their qualification to do so.
- Lead teachers in prekindergarten classrooms must meet the requirements of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future and relevant statutes. (See page 9 Instructional Staff Requirements.) If a teacher has not been identified by the date of the proposal submission, a job announcement must be included that demonstrates educational requirements and an appropriate salary.
- A Director cannot be regarded as the teacher unless he or she is working in the classroom full-time for the 6.5-hour instructional day every day.
- Lead teachers who hold a state teaching certificate must be paid a commensurate salary with the LEA in the respective county.
- For classrooms with more than 10 students, there must be an Assistant Teacher who meets the requirements of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future and relevant statutes. (See page 9 Instructional Staff Requirements.)
- At least one meal per day must be provided. It is recommended that meals served meet the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) requirements, but not required.
- Private providers: a license check will be performed prior to the final awarding of the grant to ensure a valid child care license is held and there are no major health and safety violations.
- Maryland EXCELS Quality Rating level will be checked prior to awarding the final grant to ensure the program meets the grant requirement.

- Head Start programs only: applicants must submit a letter of support from the Head Start program-funded grantee if the applicant is not the funded grantee.
- All grant requirements must be met prior to the start of the grant year.
- Lead Teachers must be hired by July 1, 2025 in order to avoid a disruption in grant funds.
- Invoices will not be paid unless all grant requirements have been met.

Note: Final awarding of the grant will be contingent on the applicant meeting all grant requirements.

Instructional Staff Requirements

To qualify as a lead teacher one of the following requirements must be met:

- A bachelor's degree in early childhood education, child development, or a related field, or
- A bachelor's degree from another country, verified as equivalent to a U.S. degree, or
- A bachelor's degree in an unrelated field, along with experience or qualifications in early childhood education.
- Educators with 10 years of experience as of July 1, 2025 can qualify, but they must meet additional assessment criteria with a minimum score determined by MSDE on the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) and, by July 1, 2030, earn an associate degree in early childhood education.

To qualify as an assistant teacher one of the following requirements must be met:

- A high school diploma
- Alternatively, as of July 1, 2025, educators with at least 5 years of documented experience actively serving as a teaching assistant in a publicly funded prekindergarten classroom for a minimum of 5 years for at least 20 hours per week and 180 days per year.

Memorandum of Understanding

Upon receiving the grant award, LEAs must submit a signed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between MSDE, the LEA, and the private provider(s). The MOU must outline the roles and responsibilities between MSDE and the LEA, and between the LEA and each eligible private provider who is a grantee in the LEA catchment area. LEAs and private providers are expected to collaborate on a plan.

An MOU signed by MSDE, the LEA and any eligible private providers receiving funds is due no later than September 30, 2025. MSDE will provide the MOU that must be signed and returned to the program contact listed in this GIG.

The MOU will include:

- A plan for providing services for children with disabilities, regardless of family enrollment preference.
- A plan for providing supports for children who speak a language other than English.
- A plan for providing support for children experiencing homelessness.

- A process by which a parent or guardian is able to indicate a preference for eligible prekindergarten providers.
- A plan to centralize prekindergarten enrollment across the county regardless of family enrollment preference.
- The manner for processing the payment of the state share, local share, and family share for each child who is enrolled with an eligible prekindergarten provider;
- Any agreed upon administrative costs to be retained by an agency that is party to this agreement;
- A plan to address racial and socioeconomic integration in prekindergarten classrooms;
- A plan to avoid, to the extent practicable, a disproportionate concentration of students of the same race, ethnicity, disability status, and income within an eligible provider; and
- Any other provisions necessary to meet the goals of the program.

The Maryland State Department of Education will continue to provide technical assistance sessions to support eligible entities with the MOU template and process.

Application Requirements

The Prekindergarten Expansion Grant Program is a competitive grant opportunity. As such, MSDE highly encourages applicants to put their best effort forward in crafting an application. **To expedite the award process and ensure grantees can move without interruption into the 2025-2026 school year, MSDE will review applications on a rolling basis beginning March 5, 2025.** MSDE encourages timely submission to increase an applicant's likelihood of receiving an award.

Modified Short Form (Fast Track) Application

All new applicants must complete the application in its entirety. However, applicants seeking renewal or expansion to an existing approved program may submit a modified short form application if the applicant's site(s) has(have) a track record of success. A track record of success means an applicant has maintained a lead teacher who meets the grant requirements, met and/or maintained a minimum Maryland EXCELS level 3 or above, in compliance with reporting requirements and fiscal guidelines, and is not under a corrective action plan for fiscal or instructional concerns.

If an applicant is eligible to and desires to submit the modified short form application, the applicant need only complete and submit those application elements below indicated by the following symbol:



Those application elements, listed below, that are required for a complete modified short form submission are:

- Maryland EXCELS and Accreditation
- Application Cover Page
- Goals and Outcomes
- Plan of Operation (only required if different from the previous year)
- Staffing, Management Plan, and Key Personnel
- Budget and Budget Narrative

For modified short form applications, MSDE will review, evaluate, and issue application scores based only on the application sections identified above. The modified short form application requires a minimum score of 35 (Meet Criteria scores range from 4-7) in total – compared to the full application minimum of 70. MSDE will return an award determination within 30 days of submission for all modified short form applications.

MARYLAND EXCELS AND ACCREDITATION



Maryland Accreditation is a process in which licensed child care and early education programs commit to continuous quality improvement. Maryland Accreditation is a part of the broader Maryland EXCELS system, in which programs earn quality ratings in targeted areas and commit to continuous quality improvement for the children they serve. Maryland EXCELS participants receive a rating from 1 to 5. A rating of 1 is awarded to providers and programs that successfully meet initial requirements, while a rating of 5 is awarded to those programs that have achieved the highest quality rating and that demonstrate competence in areas such as staffing and professional development, accreditation,

developmentally appropriate practice, compliance with licensing regulations, and administrative policies.

In order to be eligible to receive funding, programs must be participating in the Maryland EXCELS program. Programs with a rating of 1 or 2 will not be considered. Priority will be given to programs with the following rating, on a scale of 3-5 (in order of priority):

EXCELS Rating	Further documentation required
5	Provide your program's EXCELS certificate and a written plan to maintain a quality rating of 5.
4	Provide your program's EXCELS certificate and a written plan to reach a quality rating of 5 within five years.
3	Provide your program's EXCELS certificate and a written plan to reach a quality rating of 5 within five years.

APPLICANT INFORMATION

Applications must contain a completed information section. The information section should not contain any graphics or additional information. Applicants will be directed to the modified short form application in the online system after completing a brief questionnaire indicating current grantee status.

PROJECT ABSTRACT

The project statement should briefly describe the project's outcome(s) and strategies (i.e., what the project will do and how it will do it). Do not exceed the 100-word limit.

EXTENT OF NEED

Using the previous program evaluation or a needs assessment, describe how your program can use these funds to increase access to high-quality, full-day prekindergarten and school readiness services. Applicants should include the target audience and expected outcomes. For a quality response, at least one data source must be used for analysis.

New Applicants

New applicants are required to have completed a needs assessment that clearly identifies areas of attention or barriers to achieving high-quality, full-day Pre-K.

Current Grantees

For current grantees, the existing program evaluation should be analyzed to address identified areas of growth or attention.

EVIDENCE OF IMPACT

Applicants must describe how implementation of the proposed prekindergarten program will lead to the desired goal(s).

Applicants must include a description of the program's experience in implementing an effective Pre-K program or how chosen curricula, materials, and instructional strategies are tied directly to research with a track record of improving student outcomes.

Applicants must discuss how this experience or existing research aligns with the definition of high-quality Pre-K and the impact your proposed activities are likely to have on the target population(s).

GOALS AND OUTCOMES 

Applicants are required to identify clear goals and objectives that their program will achieve.

Goals communicate the final impact or outcome the program will bring about.

Outcomes/Objectives set standards of progress toward meeting the overall goal(s) of the program.

Applicants submitting a modified short form application need only submit updated goals for the next school year. Sample goals and outcomes are below.

Sample Goals and Outcomes

Goal 1:	By the end of the school year, 80% of Pre-K 4 students will demonstrate school readiness as measured by attaining level 4 on the Early Learning Assessment (ELA).
Outcome(s):	By the end of November 2025, 70% of Pre-K 4 students will attain level 2 in at least 2 learning progressions in the Language and Literacy domain of the ELA. By the end of March 2026, 80% of Pre-K 4 students will attain level 3 in at least 2 learning progressions in the mathematics domain of the ELA.
Goal 2:	The program will show 20% improvement in positive responses on a parent and staff program satisfaction survey by the end of the school year, indicating an improvement in family engagement efforts.
Outcome(s):	Pre-K staff and at least 80% of parents will complete a program satisfaction survey by mid- October 2025 and data will be collected and collated by October 31, 2025. Pre-K staff and at least 80% of parents will complete a program satisfaction survey by mid- May 2025 and data will be collected and collated by June 1, 2026.
Goal 3:	The program will establish a strong collaborative partnership with the LEA by the end of June 2025.
Outcome(s):	Lead Teachers and assistant teachers will attend Frog Street Curriculum training in August 2025, and all follow up support sessions hosted by the LEA during the 2026 school year. The program will attend at least two Blueprint support sessions by December 2025. Program and LEA will host a joint family engagement event targeting incoming kindergarten students and their parents by May 2026.
Goal 4:	Teachers will confidently manage challenging behaviors of children in their classroom setting by December 2025.
Outcome(s):	Lead Teachers will complete online Pyramid Model training modules by December 2025. By the end of February 2026, Lead Teachers will complete training, mentoring, and coaching offered by their local Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultants (IECMHC) to support the social emotional development of their students and parents/guardians.

PLAN OF OPERATION

The plan of operation provides information about how your program will accomplish its goals and expand access to high-quality prekindergarten educational programs for three-year-olds and four-year-olds in Maryland. The applicant must respond to specific questions in the application that address required components of eligible full-day prekindergarten programs including: recruitment and eligibility, curriculum implementation, professional learning, coordinated services, and family engagement

Applicants submitting a modified short form application need only identify operational plans that differ from the existing/prior year site(s), if any.

EVALUATION AND DISSEMINATION

Evaluation is an important part of determining the success of the program. Applicants will be required to describe in detail what success will look like and the criteria that will be used to determine and measure success. Applicants must have a program evaluation in place to ensure continuous program improvement. The evaluation plan must identify the data and instruments that will be used to monitor the quality of the program, as well as how this information will be used to support continuous quality improvement. The plan must also include how parents and guardians will be informed and engaged about student progress and areas of concern to support student learning and growth.

Reporting: Grantees are required to submit interim progress reports and a final report consistent with the project's goal and objective(s). Additionally, grantees will be expected to complete an annual program evaluation report that is to be shared during the Annual Review. In addition, grantees may be required to submit additional information as requested.

STAFFING, MANAGEMENT PLAN, AND KEY PERSONNEL

Applicants should complete all site selection information and must list all administrative key personnel responsible for the successful implementation and monitoring of the grant requirements and provide resumes. Applicants must also complete the staffing qualification table so MSDE can ensure all staff meet qualification requirements (be prepared to include supporting documentation). Be sure to include the personnel responsible for instructional oversight (supporting the teachers) and a resume demonstrating that they are qualified to do so. Applicants are required to complete a management plan as part of the proposal. See a sample below.

Sample Management Plan

Person Responsible	Title	Responsibilities	Time devoted
Ms. Smith	Grant Manager	Oversee grant program, observations, complete reports, support director and staff	80%
Mr. Phillips	Accountant	Oversee grant budget, invoices, supporting documentation, and deadlines	40%
Ms. Waters	Instructional Coach	Mentor and support teachers with classroom instruction	50%

Note:

1. A Director teaching in a classroom full-time cannot serve as an instructional oversight person.
2. The instructional oversight person should devote at least 8-10 hours per month to this role.
3. Teaching staff will be captured in the Staffing and Site Selection portion of the application.

PROJECT TIMELINE

A Project Timeline tells the reviewer when key activities will take place during the grant period. Applicants should consider all the key tasks or activities that need to be conducted to implement the program successfully. The key activities should be aligned with the grant goals and objectives and proposed plan. It should contain the following categories: management, implementation, and evaluation.

- Management activities provide oversight and monitor grant requirements.
- Implementation activities directly support grant outcomes.
- Evaluation activities assess program quality and student progress.
- The project timeline should cover the grant year.

See a sample timeline on page 17.

Sample Timeline

Key Activities	Individual Responsible	Time Frame
Management Activity		
Disseminate recruitment flyers to county agencies that serve EL students and those with IEPs/Ext IFSPs	Grant Manager and Director	April 2025
Recruit and hire certified staff	Director	April-June 2025
Attend and participate in partner meetings	Grant Manager and Director	October 2025, January 2026, March 2026
Implementation Activity		
Purchase supplies and materials to support curriculum, classroom instruction, accreditation, and Maryland EXCELS	Director, Teachers	July 2025
Staff will attend curriculum training	Director, Teachers	August 2025
Evaluation Activity		
Conduct Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) observations	CLASS observer	October 2025 and March 2026
Administer Assessments	Teachers	October 2025–May 2026

COLLABORATION AND SUSTAINABILITY

Applicants must have a long-term plan for sustainability including community and business partnerships to support high-quality programming, expand resources, and provide students with access to social, health, and academic support. The plan may include braiding funds and/or matching funds to the extent possible.

Budget and Budget Narrative

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, allowable, and cost-effective. All projected costs should appear in the budget narrative and must be included on the budget form (C-1-25). Reviewers should be able to see a clear connection between the proposed activities and the budget line items. Clearly show the requested funds and in-kind contributions for each line item if applicable. Please note that in-kind contributions are not required.

The funding per prekindergarten student will be \$14,473 per full-day slot for three-year-olds and four-year-olds from families earning up to 300% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL).

Each line must be detailed and specific. Budget categories should be broken down into specific line items. For example, “meeting expenses” can be captured in the “Other” category and the line items can be broken down into room rental, photocopying and AV equipment. There is no page limit for the budget, so be as detailed as possible. Please note tuition may be charged to the grant, however the grant budget may not be directed to tuition only. See a sample below.

Use the format indicated by the following excerpt from a sample Budget Narrative.

Salaries and Wages (list separately for each position)

Line item	Calculation	Requested	In-Kind	Total
Project Manager	\$50/hr. x 40 hrs. per week x 52 weeks	\$83,200	\$20,800	\$104,000
Total for salaries & wages:		\$83,200	\$20,800	\$104,000

Contracted Services

Line item	Calculation	Requested	In-Kind	Total
Music Therapy	10 weeks @\$65/session x 2 times a year	\$1,300		\$1,300
Total for contracted services:		\$1,300		\$1,300

Appendices

The following appendices must be included with an application. Applicants submitting a modified short form application should only submit items associated with required application sections. Include other appendices as deemed necessary.

Appendix A: A works cited page is required for any sources that are cited in the proposal.

Appendix B: A description of how the income verification forms and family-provided documents will be collected and maintained on-site. The income eligibility criteria are based on the Federal Poverty Level (FPL).

Appendix C: Head Start programs only: Applicants must submit a letter of support from the principal of the Head Start program-funded grantee, if the applicant is not the principal funded grantee. Evidence of status of a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization, if applicable

Appendix D: Resumes of Key Personnel: Include a one-page resume for each person playing a key role in the project. Only information relevant to the project should be included in the resume. Resumes for teachers are not necessary. Be sure to include the resume for the individual selected to provide instructional oversight.

Appendix E: Evidence of Lead Teacher qualifications per the Blueprint requirements (See page 9 Instructional staff requirements) or the job announcement showing education requirements and salary.

Appendix F: Evidence of Assistant Teacher credentials per the Blueprint requirements (See page 9 Instructional staff requirements)

Appendix G: Evidence of EXCELS rating and a description of how you will maintain or achieve a quality rating of 5 in the prescribed time.

Appendix H: Copy of child care license (if applicable)

Appendix I: Accreditation certificate (if applicable).

Appendix J: Request for advance payment (optional).

- A 15% advancement of the grant award amount will be issued upon request, and all supporting receipts will be required. Applicants who are approved for funding and meet all grant requirements are eligible to receive a 15% advance upon request. Applicants requesting an advance must complete the following Request for Payment Advance and submit it with the application. Advance requests received after the application has been submitted will not be considered.

Appendix K: [A signed recipient assurances page](#)

Appendix L: [A signed C-125 MSDE budget form](#)

Instructional Staff Requirements

To qualify as a lead teacher one of the following requirements must be met:

- A bachelor's degree in early childhood education, child development, or a related field, or
- A bachelor's degree from another country, verified as equivalent to a U.S. degree, or
- A bachelor's degree in an unrelated field, along with experience or qualifications in early childhood education.
- Educators with 10 years of experience as of July 1, 2025 can qualify, but they must meet additional assessment criteria with a minimum score determined by MSDE on the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) and, by July 1, 2030, earn an associate degree in early childhood education.

To qualify as an assistant teacher one of the following requirements must be met:

- A high school diploma
- Alternatively, as of July 1, 2025, educators with at least 5 years of documented experience actively serving as a teaching assistant in a publicly funded prekindergarten classroom for a minimum of 5 years for at least 20 hours per week and 180 days per year.

Career Ladder: Md. Code, Educ. § 7-1A-08: <https://casetext.com/statute/code-of-maryland/article-education/division-ii-elementary-and-secondary-education/title-7-public-schools/subtitle-1a-publicly-funded-full-day-prekindergarten-programs/section-7-1a-08>

Submission Requirements

Proposals must include the following submission requirements:

- Interested applicants must submit the application online using Qualtrics.
- Interested applicants must complete the application and attach any supporting documentation as appendices using Qualtrics.
- Applications must be completed as directed and presented in an organized and professional manner.
- The project abstract must not exceed 100 words.
- Please direct all questions to prekexpansiongrant.msde@maryland.gov.

The Review Process

The Prekindergarten Expansion Grant program is a competitive grant program with limited funds. MSDE will prioritize existing awardees and, as such, the review of proposals will be a two-part process:

Applications will be pre-screened for submission requirements and inclusion of all required appendices. Applications not meeting all pre-screen requirements will not be reviewed.

- MSDE will confirm that any applicants submitting a modified short form application are, in fact, eligible to do so.
- MSDE will begin to review complete applications on a rolling basis beginning on March 5, 2025.

A review committee established by MSDE will evaluate applications using the scoring rubric. The scoring rubric is tailored to the grant program, its intent, and intended impact on the target population. Final approval for grant awards will be determined by the review committee.

Note: MSDE reserves the right to take into consideration geographic distribution and a prior track record of success when making awards.

Review Committee

The committee will be composed of three (3) representatives from the MSDE. Reviewers will assign numerical scores to each proposal based on the criteria on the scoring rubric below. Applications must receive a minimum score of 70 in order to be considered for funding. For modified short form applications, MSDE will issue scores only based on the areas identified that have the corresponding icon. The modified short form application requires a minimum score of 35 (Meet Criteria scores range from 4-7) in total. MSDE will return an award determination within 30 days of submission of the rolling submission date for all modified short form applications.

Prekindergarten Expansion Grant Scoring Rubric

MARYLAND EXCELS AND ACCREDITATION (10 POINTS)

Level 3 Exceeds Criteria	Level 2 Meets Criteria	Level 1 Does Not Meet Criteria
<p>The program is published at a level 5 and has provided the certificate and the current accreditation certificate.</p> <p>The program describes strategies, and there are comprehensive processes in place to allow ratings to be maintained. The application table is completed as listed.</p>	<p>The program is published at a level 4 and has provided the certificate along with an accreditation certificate (if applicable). The program describes how level 5 will be attained in 5 years and completes the table as listed.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>The program is published at a level 3, has provided the certificate, and is not yet accredited. The program describes how level 5 will be attained within 5 years and the table is completed.</p>	Not Applicable

EXTENT OF NEED (10 POINTS)

Level 3 Exceeds Criteria	Level 2 Meets Criteria	Level 1 Does Not Meet Criteria
<p>A needs assessment or previous/existing program evaluation was conducted that identifies multiple related problems. Multiple data sources are used, including both quantitative and qualitative data. These data are presented and clearly identify areas of growth that connect to clear implementation strategies.</p>	<p>A needs assessment or previous/existing program evaluation was conducted, and the application addresses any identified area of growth or attention. However, only one data source is used for analysis.</p>	<p>No needs assessment or previous/existing program evaluation was done, or the applicant provides a problem, but the data presented does not align to the problem.</p>

EVIDENCE OF IMPACT (10 POINTS)

Level 3 Exceeds Criteria	Level 2 Meets Criteria	Level 1 Does Not Meet Criteria
<p>The application describes how the proposed prekindergarten program implementation will lead to the desired goal(s). The application includes a detailed description of the program's experience in implementing an effective Pre-K program and the impact the proposed activities are likely to have on the target population(s). The application goes further, citing data and research specific to chosen curricula, interventions, and strategies to link planned programming to a likely impact on student success.</p>	<p>The application describes how the proposed prekindergarten program implementation will lead to the desired goal(s). The application includes a description of the program's experience in implementing an effective Pre-K program and the impact the proposed activities are likely to have on the target population(s).</p>	<p>The application partially describes how the proposed prekindergarten program implementation will lead to the desired goal(s) and description of the program's experience in implementing an effective Pre-K program.</p>

GOALS AND OUTCOMES (10 POINTS) 

Level 3 Exceeds Criteria	Level 2 Meets Criteria	Level 1 Does Not Meet Criteria
<p>The application contains more than one goal and outcome that aligns with the Maryland Early Learning Standards. The goals are clear, and the outcomes are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely (S.M.A.R.T.).</p>	<p>The application contains at least one goal that aligns with the Maryland Early Learning Standards.</p>	<p>The application's goals and outcomes are not clearly identified, not measurable, and/or not aligned with the Maryland Early Learning Standards.</p>

PLAN OF OPERATION (10 POINTS) 

Level 3 Exceeds Criteria	Level 2 Meets Criteria	Level 1 Does Not Meet Criteria
The application is comprehensive and fully addresses each of the seven questions in describing how all proposed activities will lead to the successful implementation of full-day, high-quality Pre-K for all eligible students.	The application addresses each of the seven questions with some details for how each of the proposed activities will lead to the successful implementation of full- day, high-quality Pre-K for all eligible students.	The application partially describes how all proposed activities will lead to the successful implementation of full-day, high-quality Pre-K for all eligible students.

EVALUATION AND DISSEMINATION (10 POINTS)

Level 3 Exceeds Criteria	Level 2 Meets Criteria	Level 1 Does Not Meet Criteria
<p>The application provides a distinct plan for program evaluation to ensure continuous improvement and inform future decisions.</p> <p>This includes identifying the data and instruments, how the information will be used, and how families/parents/ guardians will be informed of program and student(s) progress and areas of concern. The plan implements multiple data collection methods.</p>	<p>The application provides a plan for program evaluation to ensure continuous improvement and inform future decisions.</p> <p>The plan includes some details of how success will be determined. The plan identifies data and instruments, how the information will be used, and how families/parents/ guardians will be informed of student(s) progress and areas of concern.</p>	The application does not include a clear plan for program evaluation and continuous improvement, and details are limited.

STAFFING, MANAGEMENT PLAN, AND KEY PERSONNEL (10 POINTS) 

Level 3 Exceeds Criteria	Level 2 Meets Criteria	Level 1 Does Not Meet Criteria
<p>All the requirements under meets criteria are met. In addition, a resume including information relevant to the project is provided for all personnel.</p> <p>The staffing qualification table is also correct and complete, and multiple staff exceed qualification requirements. All supporting documentation is provided.</p>	<p>All aspects of this section of the application are addressed, including information relevant to all key personnel.</p> <p>The staffing qualification table is also correct and complete, and staff meet qualification requirements. All supporting documentation is provided.</p>	<p>Administrative and key personnel are not listed in the chart, responsibilities are vague, or time devoted is missing. The instructional oversight person does not meet the qualifications. Some or no resumes are provided.</p> <p>The staffing qualification table is incomplete or incorrect. The teacher(s) and/or teacher assistant(s) do not meet qualification requirements and/or partial documentation is provided.</p>

PROJECT TIMELINE (10 POINTS)

Level 3 Exceeds Criteria	Level 2 Meets Criteria	Level 1 Does Not Meet Criteria
<p>The project timeline chart lists all key activities, individuals responsible, and time frame. The key activities are aligned with the grant goals, objectives, and proposed plan and correspond with the correct categories. The timeline covers the entire grant year. In addition, a management plan has been developed to ensure that the timeline remains on track.</p>	<p>The project timeline chart lists all key activities, individuals responsible, and time frame. The key activities are aligned with the grant goals, objectives, and proposed plan and correspond with the correct categories. The timeline covers the entire grant year.</p>	<p>The project timeline chart is missing either key activities, the individual responsible, or time frame; or contains vague activities that may not correspond with the correct categories. The timeline partially covers the grant year.</p>

COLLABORATION AND SUSTAINABILITY (10 POINTS)

Level 3 Exceeds Criteria	Level 2 Meets Criteria	Level 1 Does Not Meet Criteria
<p>The application contains a thorough plan for sustainability with blending and braiding federal, state, and local funding streams.</p> <p>The plan includes extensive community and business partnerships.</p> <p>Responsibilities of collaborating partners are provided in detail. The plan may or may not include matching funds to the extent possible.</p>	<p>The application contains a thorough plan for sustainability with extensive community and business partnerships. Responsibilities of collaborating partners are provided in detail. The plan may or may not include matching funds to the extent possible.</p>	<p>The application contains a vague plan for sustainability. A list of partners is included but without their respective roles.</p>

BUDGET AND BUDGET NARRATIVE (10 POINTS) 

Level 3 Exceeds Criteria	Level 2 Meets Criteria	Level 1 Does Not Meet Criteria
<p>The application includes a budget and budget narrative that follows the prescribed budget categories. Each line item is specific and shows calculations. All line items are calculated correctly, and budget forms are free of errors. Items on the budget narrative are reasonable, allowable, and allocable with justification. The budget narrative and C-1-25 are aligned. The budget narrative aligns with the proposed activities.</p> <p>The application includes additional sources of funding or revenue to supplement activities in the proposed budget and budget narrative that ties back to corresponding community and business partnerships.</p>	<p>The application includes a budget and budget narrative that follows the prescribed budget categories. Each line item is specific and shows calculations. All line items are calculated correctly, and budget forms are free of errors. Items on the budget narrative are reasonable, allowable, and allocable with justification. The budget narrative and C-1-25 are aligned. The budget narrative aligns with the proposed activities.</p>	<p>The application includes budget expenses with limited justification and/or does not align with the prescribed categories or the proposed activities. Costs may not be reasonable, allowable, or allocable. Budget contains errors and/or missing calculations.</p>

Award Notification

Final notification of awards will be sent by email between May 5-15, 2025. MSDE will review all applications on a rolling basis beginning March 5, 2025. Processing of the official Notice of Grant Awards (NOGA) will begin promptly on the first day of the next fiscal year (on July 1st); this process can take 6-8 weeks. An invoice template for billing will be sent with the official NOGA.

Applicants meeting all grant requirements may be eligible to receive a 15% advance upon request. Applicants requesting an advance must complete a Request for Payment Advance and submit it with the application. The Request for Payment Advance form can be found in the application and on the MSDE prekindergarten website. Advance payment requests received after the application has been submitted will not be considered.

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 with supporting documentation.
September 30, 2025	Signed MOU is due to the MSDE program contact. The LEA will coordinate with private providers to facilitate the MOU signing process.
September-October 2025	An initial site visit will be conducted.
October 15, 2025	Submission of student enrollment data (student demographics, enrollment, and income eligibility) from the first day of school through September 30.
January 30, 2026	First interim report due (the C-125-C form can be found on the MSDE grants webpage). Submission of student enrollment data (student demographics, enrollment, and income eligibility) from October 1 through December 31. Collaboration check-in form is due.
March-May 2026	Annual Review visit will be conducted.
April 30, 2026	Second interim report due (the C-125-C form can be found on the MSDE grants webpage).
June 30, 2026	Submission of student enrollment data (student demographics, enrollment, and income eligibility) from January 1 through end of school year.
July 31, 2026	Final report due covering the grant period (the C-125-D form can be found on the MSDE grants webpage).
October 30, 2026	Annual financial report (AFR) is due within 120 days after the grant period ends.

Notes: Any requests for amendments must be submitted at least 45 days before the grant period ends, and must be submitted using the C-125-B form found in the [Grant Budget Forms Workbook](#) on the [MSDE grants webpage](#). Final invoices must be submitted no later than 60 days after the grant period ends.

Grant Application Timeline

This funding opportunity, including all attachments and updates, can be downloaded from the [MSDE Office of Grants Administration and Compliance website](#). The application must be submitted electronically using Qualtrics by the application deadline.

Date	Timeline Event
February 25, 2025	The Grant Information Guide and the application for participating are released.
February 27 -March 21, 2025	MSDE will hold a virtual customer service support session for interested applicants.
March 5, 2025	MSDE will begin reviewing submitted applications on a rolling basis
April 11, 2023	The grant application period closes.
April 11-May 5, 2025	MSDE Review Committee will evaluate proposals.
July 1, 2023	MSDE will notify applicants of the award status.
July 1, 2025	The grant period begins.
June 30, 2026	The grant period ends.

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:

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

410-767-0123 - voice

410-767-0431 - fax

Deaf and hard of hearing use Relay.

The General Education Provisions Act (GEPa) Sect 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

MSDE will hold three customer service support sessions for interested applicants. During these sessions, MSDE personnel will provide an overview of the application process. The sessions will be on:

Thursday, February 27, 2025

1:00 – 2:30 p.m.

Video call link: <https://maryland.zoom.us/join/91618827218>

Tuesday, March 4, 2025 - Spanish

1:00 – 2:30 p.m.

Video call link: <https://maryland.zoom.us/join/91618827218>

Wednesday, March 5, 2025

1:00 – 2:30 p.m.

Video call link: <https://maryland.zoom.us/join/91618827218>

Thursday, March 6, 2025 - Spanish

1:00 – 2:30 p.m.

Video call link: <https://maryland.zoom.us/join/91618827218>

Wednesday, March 12, 2025

1:00 – 2:30 p.m.

Video call link: <https://maryland.zoom.us/join/91618827218>

Wednesday, March 19, 2025

1:00 – 2:30 p.m.

Video call link: <https://maryland.zoom.us/join/91618827218>

Additionally, MSDE will hold four open office hour sessions. During these sessions, MSDE personnel will answer questions regarding the application and application process. The link to access the office hours is below:

Link: <https://maryland.zoom.us/join/91618827218>

The office hours will be held from 1:00-2:00 p.m. on the following dates:

- Monday, March 10, 2025
- Thursday, March 13, 2025 - Spanish
- Thursday, March 20, 2025
- Friday, March 21, 2025

If you have questions about the application or the process, please contact:

PROGRAM CONTACT

Prekindergarten and Mixed Delivery Program Manager

Division of Early Childhood

Phone: (410) 767-0088

Nykia.Washington@maryland.gov

A list of frequently asked questions (FAQ) and answers will be posted to the Prekindergarten [webpage](#) following customer service support sessions.

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