



**Maryland**

STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

# GRANT INFORMATION GUIDE

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## Prekindergarten Expansion Grant

### **Maryland State Department of Education**

200 West Baltimore Street  
Baltimore, Maryland 21201

### **Deadline**

April 30, 2024  
No later than 5:00 p.m. EDT

**MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

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## Program Description

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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 March 29, 2023.

#### Deadline

Proposals are due no later than 5 pm on April 30, 2024, but MSDE will begin reviewing applications on a rolling basis starting April 3, 2024.

**Grant Period**

July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025

**Funding Amount Available**

\$26,644,000

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

**Estimated Number of Grants**

Sixty (60)

**Funding Per Slot**

\$13,000 per full-day slot for three-year-olds and four- year-olds

**Submission Instructions**

Grant applications must be submitted by 5:00pm April 30, 2024, via email to [prekexpansiongrant.msde@maryland.gov](mailto:prekexpansiongrant.msde@maryland.gov)

**PROGRAM CONTACT****Dr. Nykia Washington**

Prekindergarten and Mixed Delivery Program Manager

Division of Early Childhood

(410)767-0088

[Nykia.Washington@maryland.gov](mailto: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 and provide additional assistance when requested throughout the grant period. In addition, MSDE will monitor program implementation throughout the grant performance period to ensure each grantee is on target to meet its goals and fully expend its awarded program resources.

## 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.
- 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 five 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 2024 – 2025 school year, MSDE will review applications on a rolling basis beginning April 25, 2024. MSDE encourages timely submission to increase an applicant's likelihood of receiving an award.**

## Use of Funds

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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 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. 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).
- 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.
- 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 2025 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, 2023 enrollment count. For example, if the LEA received Blueprint funding in Fiscal Year 2025 for serving 100 three- and four-year-old children in full-day prekindergarten the prior year (2023-2024 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 FY25. The September 30, 2024 (School Year 2024-2025) 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

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### 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 Levels \(FPL\)](#).
- 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.
- Identified community 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.
- All lead teachers in prekindergarten classrooms must hold a bachelor's degree. If a teacher has not been identified by the date of the proposal submission, a job announcement must be included that demonstrates education requirement and 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.
- Lead teachers who have their teaching certificate must be paid a salary commensurate with the LEA in the respective county.
- For classrooms with more than 10 students, there must be an Assistant Teacher who holds a minimum of a high school diploma.
- At least one meal per day must be provided. It's 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.
- 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, 2024, 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.

### **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 July 1, 2024. 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 and MOU process.

## Application Requirements

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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 2024 – 2025 school year, MSDE will review applications on a rolling basis beginning April 25, 2024.** 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; and met and/or maintained a minimum Maryland EXCELS Level 4 or above, in compliance with reporting requirements and fiscal guidelines.

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 Operations (only required if different from the previous year)
- Staffing, Management, 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 65. 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 that have achieved the highest quality rated programs 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 level 5 rating
4	Provide your program's EXCELS certificate, and a written plan to reach a rating of 5 within five years.
3	Provide your program's EXCELS certificate, and a written plan to reach a rating of 5 within five years

## PROPOSAL COVER PAGE



Proposals must have the Proposal Cover Sheet provided in the application for participation. The cover page should not contain any graphics nor additional information and must be signed by the head of the agency. **Applications can use the same cover page as the full applications but should clearly indicate on the cover page if the applicant is submitting a full application or if the applicant is submitting a modified, short form application as a renewal/expansion of existing program application.**

## 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. 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. For previous awardees, the existing program evaluation should be analyzed to address identified areas of growth or attention.

For a quality response, at least one data source must be used for analysis.

## 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. 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. Objectives set standards of progress towards 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 are on page 14.

### 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:** By the end of November 2024, 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.

**Outcome:** By the end of March 2025, 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:** Pre-K staff and at least 80% of parents will complete a program satisfaction survey by mid-October 2023 and data will be collected and collated by October 31, 2024.

**Outcome:** Pre-K staff and at least 80% of parents will complete a program satisfaction survey by mid-May 2024 and data will be collected and collated by June 1, 2025.

**Goal 3:** The program will establish a strong collaborative partnership with the LEA by the end of June 2024.

**Outcome:** Lead Teachers and assistant teachers will attend Frog Street Curriculum training in August 2024, and all follow up support sessions hosted by the LEA during the 2025 school year.

**Outcome:** The program will attend at least two Blueprint support sessions by December 2024.

**Outcome:** Program and LEA will host a joint family engagement event targeting incoming kindergarten students and their parents by May 2025.

**Goal 4:** Teachers will confidently manage challenging behaviors of children in their classroom setting by December 2024.

**Outcome:** Lead Teachers will complete online Pyramid Model training modules by December 2024.

**Outcome:** By the end of February 2025, 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 on page 16.



### Sample Management Plan

Person Responsible	Title, Organization	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 instructional oversight person.
2. 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**

<b>Key Activities</b>	<b>Individual Responsible</b>	<b>Time Frame</b>
<b>Management Activity</b>		
Disseminate Recruitment flyers to county agencies that serve EL students and those with IEPs/Ext IFSPs	Grant Manager and Director	April 2024
Recruit and hire certified staff	Director	April -June 2024
Attend and participate in partner meetings	Grant Manager and Director	October 2024, January 2025, March 2025
<b>Implementation Activity</b>		
Purchase supplies and materials to support curriculum, classroom instruction, accreditation and MD EXCELS	Director, Teachers	July 2024
Staff will attend curriculum training	Director, Teachers	August 2024
<b>Evaluation Activity</b>		
Conduct Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) observations	CLASS observer	October 2024 and March 2025
Administer Early Learning Assessments	Teachers	October 2024 – May 2025

**COLLABORATION AND SUSTAINABILITY**

Applicants must have a long-term plan for sustainability and community and business partnerships to support high-quality programming, expand resources, and provide students 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 in-kind contributions are not required.

The funding per prekindergarten student will be \$13,000 per full-day slot for three-year-olds and four-year-olds from families earning up to 300% of the [Federal Poverty Level \(FPL\)](#), and up to \$13,000 per slot for Head Start program applicants.

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. See a sample below.

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

#### 1. 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
<b>Total for salaries &amp; wages:</b>		\$83,200	\$20,800	\$104,000

#### 2. 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 Salaries & Wages:		\$1,300		\$1,300

## Appendices

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**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 Levels \(FPL\)](#).
- Appendix C: Head Start Program programs only: Applicants must submit a letter of support from the principal of Head Start Program-funded grantee, if the applicant is not the principal funded grantee.
- 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: a bachelor's degree or the job announcement showing education requirements and salary.
- Appendix F: Evidence of assistant teacher credentials: a minimum of a high school diploma
- Appendix G: Evidence of EXCELS rating and a description of how you will maintain or achieve a rating of 5 in the prescribed time.
- Appendix H: Accreditation certificate (if applicable).
- Appendix I: 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 J: [A signed recipient assurances page](#)
- Appendix K: [A signed C-125 MSDE budget form](#)

## Submission Requirements

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Proposals must include the following submission requirements:

- The grant application form can be downloaded from the Office of Grants Administration and Compliance website and the MSDE prekindergarten website.
- Interested applicants must download the application, attach any supporting documentation as appendices, and submit the package in its entirety in pdf form.
- Applications must be typed and presented in an organized and professional manner.
- Applications must be submitted by email to [preexpansiongrant.msde@maryland.gov](mailto:preexpansiongrant.msde@maryland.gov).
- The cover page must be the first page of the proposal.
- The project abstract that appears on the cover page must not exceed 100 words.

The original application cover page must be signed in blue ink.

## The Review Process

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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:

Written applications will be pre-screened for submission requirements and inclusion of all required sections. 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 beginning on a rolling basis beginning on April 3, 2024.


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 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 cut 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 for all modified short form applications.


## Prekindergarten Expansion Grant Scoring Rubric

Areas	Level 3 Exceeds Criteria	Level 2 Meets Criteria	Level 1 Does Not Meet Criteria
<p><b>Maryland EXCELS and Accreditation (10 points)</b></p> 	<p>The program is published at a level 5 and has provided the certificate and the current accreditation certificate.</p> <p>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 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 and 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>	<p>Not Applicable</p>


Areas	Level 3 Exceeds Criteria	Level 2 Meets Criteria	Level 1 Does Not Meet Criteria
<b>Extend of Need (10 points)</b>	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.	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.	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.
<b>Evidence of Impact (10 points)</b>	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.	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).	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.



Areas	Level 3 Exceeds Criteria	Level 2 Meets Criteria	Level 1 Does Not Meet Criteria
<p><b>Goals and Outcomes</b> (10 points)</p> 	<p>The application contains more than one goal and outcome that aligns with the Maryland Early Learning Standards. The goals are clear, and 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>
<p><b>Plan of Operation</b> (10 points)</p> 	<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>

Areas	Level 3 Exceeds Criteria	Level 2 Meets Criteria	Level 1 Does Not Meet Criteria
<b>Evaluation and Dissemination</b>  <b>(10 points)</b>	<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>	<p>The application does not include a clear plan for program evaluation and continuous improvement, and details are limited.</p>
<b>Staffing, Management Plan and Key Personnel</b>  <b>(10 points)</b>  	<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>

<b>Areas</b>	<b>Level 3 Exceeds Criteria</b>	<b>Level 2 Meets Criteria</b>	<b>Level 1 Does Not Meet Criteria</b>
<b>Project Timeline (10 points)</b>	The project timeline chart lists all key activities, individuals responsible, and time frame. The key activities are aligned with the grant goals, objectives, 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.	The project timeline chart lists all key activities, individuals responsible, and time frame. The key activities are aligned with the grant goals, objectives, proposed plan and correspond with the correct categories. The timeline covers the entire grant year.	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.
<b>Collaboration and Sustainability (10 points)</b>	<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>	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.	The application contains a vague plan for sustainability. A list of partners is included but without their respective roles.

Areas	Level 3 Exceeds Criteria	Level 2 Meets Criteria	Level 1 Does Not Meet Criteria
<p><b>Budget and Budget Narrative</b> <b>(10 points)</b></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 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**

Notification of awards will be sent by email on or before June 4, 2024. MSDE will review all applications on a rolling basis beginning April 3, 2024. Processing of the official Notice of Grant Awards (NOGA) will begin promptly on the first day of 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.

**Pilot Program**

All recipients of the grant will participate in a pilot of the Maryland Young Multilingual Learner Family Interview Questionnaire. The purpose of this questionnaire is to identify and understand a child's language background to support and enhance their language development and learning experiences. MSDE will host an information session and gather feedback from grantees on the utility and implementation of this questionnaire.

## 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.
July 1, 2024	Signed MOU is due to the MSDE program contact. The LEA will coordinate with private providers to facilitate the MOU signing process.
Sep – Oct 2024	Initial site visit will be conducted.
Oct 15, 2024	Submission of student enrollment data (student demographics, enrollment, and income eligibility) from first day of school through Sept 30.
Jan 30, 2025	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 Oct 1 through Dec 31. Collaboration check-in form is due.
Mar – May, 2025	Annual Review visit will be conducted.
Apr 30, 2025	Second interim report due (the C-125-C form can be found on the MSDE grants webpage).
Jun 30, 2025	Submission of student enrollment data (student demographics, enrollment, and income eligibility) from Jan 1 through end of school year.
Jul 31, 2025	Final report due covering the grant period (the C-125-D form can be found on the MSDE grants webpage).
Oct 30, 2025	Annual financial report (AFR) due within 120 days after the grant period ends.

**Notes:**

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](#).

Date	Timeline Event
March 15, 2024	The Grant Information Guide and the application for participating are released.
April 1-12, 2024	MSDE will hold virtual customer service support sessions for interested applicants.
April 3, 2024	MSDE will begin reviewing submitted applications on a rolling basis
April 30, 2024	The grant application period closes.
May 1 –May 30, 2024	MSDE Review Committee will evaluate proposals.
June 4, 2024	MSDE will notify applicants of the award status.
July 1, 2024	MSDE will begin to process the Notice of Grant Awards (NOGAs).
July 1, 2024	The grant period begins
June 30, 2025	The grant period ends.



## Non-Discrimination Statement

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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 Finance and Operations**

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**

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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

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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:

### Monday, April 1, 2024

1:00 – 2:00 p.m.

Video call link:

<https://www.google.com/url?q=https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85875764596&sa=D&source=calendar&ust=1710857039702507&usq=AOvVaw0oej4NCRG2xoFOGsguCka4>

### Wednesday, April 10, 2024

1:00 – 2:00 p.m.

Video call link:

<https://www.google.com/url?q=https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85875764596&sa=D&source=calendar&ust=1710857039702507&usq=AOvVaw0oej4NCRG2xoFOGsguCka4>

### Friday, April 12, 2024

1:00 – 2:00 p.m.

Video call link:

<https://www.google.com/url?q=https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85875764596&sa=D&source=calendar&ust=1710857039702507&usq=AOvVaw0oej4NCRG2xoFOGsguCka4>

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

### PROGRAM CONTACT

#### Dr. Nykia Washington

Early Childhood Coordinator

410-767-0088

[nykia.washington@maryland.gov](mailto: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](#).