

Preschool Development Grant Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is a collaborative?

A preschool collaborative **MUST** have at least 2 partners, including a school district **AND** a Head Start, if one is available. Collaboratives **ALSO** may include private and/or parochial schools, licensed childcare centers, and nonprofits. Collaboratives must identify a lead partner to serve as the subgrantee of the grant. The lead partner must be a school district or a nonprofit. Up to 20% of preschool collaboratives may have nonprofit lead partners (please see question #11 for more information on nonprofit lead partners).

2. What is a Request for Consideration?

The Request for Consideration document is the required form that a collaborative will complete to apply for a potential grant award. Each of the worksheet tabs must be completed as outlined in the “Instructions” tab.

3. Can an individual nonprofit organization, school, or school district submit a Request for Consideration?

No. Requests for Consideration must be submitted by a collaborative, as defined in the answer to question #1.

4. Can an Early Head Start Program serving children ages birth to 3 submit a Request for Consideration?

The grant is for collaborative programs serving eligible 4-year-old children. Individual organizations would not be eligible to apply unless they are applying as a part of a new collaborative.

5. Can a failing school district submit a Request for Consideration?

Yes.

6. Can a school district that currently offers a half-day program extend the program to full-day under the grant?

The grant is targeting new seats. An extension of the day would not be considered a new seat.

7. Can a school or district with a current preschool program qualify?

The school or district qualifies only if it is part of a collaborative and is establishing new seats. Grant funds cannot be used to fund existing seats.

8. Can collaboratives funded through the Early Learning Collaborative Act receive funding under this grant?

The grant is focused on the establishment of new seats. An existing collaborative funded through the state legislation could qualify for funds to establish new seats.

9. Can districts that are not part of a collaborative establish one with the Head Start to apply for this grant?

Yes.

10. Is a district limited in the number of Head Start programs that can participate in a collaborative?

No. A collaborative may include the district and one or more Head Start programs.

11. If 20% of the lead agencies can be nonprofits, how does this factor into the ranking system?

Once all requests are ranked based on poverty, access, and reading proficiency criteria, staff will analyze the percentage of nonprofits in the potential awardee group. If nonprofit leads comprise more than 20% of the total potential awardees, the Mississippi Department of Education will contact affected nonprofit lead partners as appropriate, beginning at the bottom of the potential awardee list, to inquire about the local school district serving as lead partner. If this is acceptable, the collaborative will be included. If this is not acceptable, the collaborative will not be included in the potential awardee list, and additional collaboratives will be considered, in order of ranking, for a grant award.

12. If a collaborative applies for a single elementary school to participate, rather than all elementary schools in the district, can school-level data be used?

No. While a collaborative could submit an application to provide new seats in a single school, district poverty rates and access information will be used in the ranking process.

13. How will poverty, access, and reading proficiency rates be calculated for collaboratives that include multiple school districts?

A weighted average will be calculated using kindergarten enrollment figures from the collaborative districts. This weighted average will be used to determine poverty rate, access, and reading proficiency.

14. What are the requirements for 1:1 local matching funds?

Local matching funds may include local tax dollars, federal dollars as allowed, parent tuition, philanthropic contributions, or in-kind donations of facilities, equipment, and services required as a part of the program, such as food service or health screenings. Because Mississippi does not mandate preschool programs, Title funds could serve as the local match for the grant. **NOTE:** For Early Learning Collaboratives that are establishing new seats, current matching funds cannot be used to match for this grant. Additional matching funds must be provided.

15. When must the 1:1 local matching funds be established?

Local matching funds must be available at the beginning of the grant award period.

16. Do districts need to provide necessary data to determine "high-need"?

No. Only the fields in the Request for Consideration are needed.

17. Is Excel by 5 a required component of the proposal?

No. Excel by 5 is an example of existing collaboration.

18. What is considered a full-day program?

Full-day programs must have a minimum of 1,080 instructional hours per school year. State rules and regulations indicate that the entire school day counts towards instructional hours.

19. Will teachers become eligible for Public Employee Retirement System (PERS) benefits?

Employees of state agencies (i.e., school districts, community colleges, institutions of higher learning) are eligible for PERS benefits. Head Start employees, nonprofit employees, and private provider employees are not eligible for PERS benefits.