

# Selection Process for Preschool Awards

## BACKGROUND

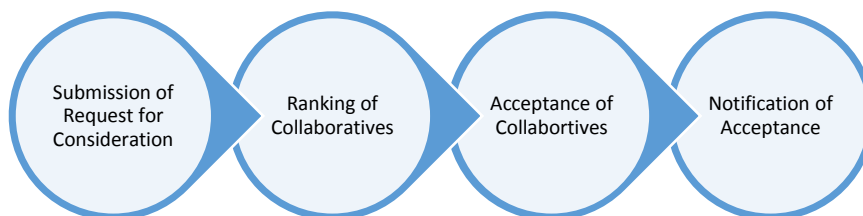
Mississippi has an opportunity to win \$15M per year for four years in federal funding to support the expansion of our new state preschool program. The Mississippi Department of Education is writing the federal grant application on behalf of the state. The application has very specific requirements as to how Mississippi may use the funds:

- No more than 35% of funds may be used for state-level infrastructure, such as monitoring and oversight, administration, technical assistance, etc.
- At least 65% of funds must be used to support *new*, high-quality preschool classrooms and seats, or to raise the quality of *existing* preschool classrooms and seats. ***Mississippi has chosen to apply for funds to open access to new, high-quality preschool classrooms and seats.***
- All children served by grant funds must be at or below 200% of the federal poverty line.

In order to increase the likelihood Mississippi will be funded, Mississippi is identifying high-need communities for inclusion in the application.

This document explains

- 1) how preschool collaborative teams may apply for inclusion in the application and
- 2) the process the Mississippi Department of Education will use to determine which proposed collaborative teams will be selected.



## STEP ONE: SUBMISSION OF REQUEST FOR CONSIDERATION

Preschool collaborative teams may submit to the Mississippi Department of Education a Request for Consideration via a Lead Partner.

### Requirements for Preschool Collaboratives

- Preschool collaboratives MUST include 1) a school district AND 2) a Head Start, if one is available. Preschool collaboratives also may include private and/or parochial schools, licensed childcare centers, and nonprofits.
- A preschool collaborative 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.
- Grant funding can only be used for NEW seats or classrooms.
- **Collaboratives may not propose to serve more than 200 children.**
- All seats must meet the definition of high-quality preschool programs.

### Requirements for the Request for Consideration

Requests for consideration must include the following:

1. **Contact Information Form:** This form requires the name and contact information of all participating partners.
2. **Current and Proposed Children Served Table:** This table requires the number of current and proposed 4-year-old students and classrooms to be served by all named partners.
3. **Signed Commitment Form:** This signature form requires all the named partners to agree abide by the definition of high-quality preschool if awarded funds. It must be signed by an authorized representative of each partner.
4. **Evidence of Commitment to High-Quality Preschool:** The collaborative must submit a brief (1-2 page) narrative describing the collaborative's commitment to high-quality preschool. The preschool collaborative may demonstrate this commitment by describing
  - a. Excel by 5 participation;
  - b. An established early learning council;
  - c. Documentation of on-going collaboration between partners;
  - d. Previous collaborative application;
  - e. Blended Head Start classrooms; or
  - f. Other evidence of commitment, such as a Head Start-LEA agreement or evidence of child care provider participation in school district professional development.
5. **Plan for Matching Funds and Sustainability:** The preschool collaborative must submit a brief (1-2) page narrative describing the preschool collaborative's plan to secure matching funds as well as its tentative plan for sustaining the collaborative at the conclusion of the grant period.

## **STEP TWO: RANKING OF PRESCHOOL COLLABORATIVES**

After a completeness and eligibility check, preschool collaboratives submitting a request for consideration by the deadline will be ranked by the selection criteria for high-need communities.

### **Completeness and Eligibility Check**

The Mississippi Department of Education will only consider complete requests for consideration from eligible preschool collaboratives.

#### **1. Complete**

Requests for consideration will be deemed complete if all the required information is provided. MDE reserves the right to remove from consideration any request containing false or misleading information.

#### **2. Eligible**

Preschool collaboratives will be considered eligible if they meet the following requirements:

- a. **Composition**: Preschool collaboratives must include a school district and a Head Start. Preschool collaboratives also may include private and/or parochial schools, licensed childcare centers, and nonprofits.
- b. **Lead Partner**: A preschool collaborative must identify a Lead Partner to serve as the Subgrantee of the grant. The Lead Partner must be a school district or a nonprofit.

### **Selection Criteria for High-Need Communities**

A “high-need” community is a high-poverty, low-access community in which children struggle to attain proficiency in reading by the third grade. To identify these communities, the Mississippi Department of Education has developed the following grant-aligned selection criteria:

#### **1. Poverty**

“Poverty” is defined as the percentage of children qualifying for free or reduced lunch districtwide.

- Preschool collaboratives will be assigned to a “poverty band” based on their percentage of poverty. These bands are as follows: Band A—85-100% poverty; Band B—70-84% poverty; Band C—55-69% poverty, Band D—40-54% poverty, and Band E—less than 40% poverty.

#### **2. Access**

“Access” means the number and percentage of four-year-old children without access to high-quality preschool options. MDE will determine an access percentage for each district using the following formula:

- a. Numerator: The number of high-quality preschool seats is defined as the number of public school (Title I-funded, district-funded, state-funded) or Head Start seats in 2014-2015.
  - b. Denominator: As a proxy for a district’s four-year-old population, MDE will use the district’s kindergarten enrollment from 2013-2014.
- Preschool collaboratives will be assigned an “access tier” according to their level of access, as follows: Tier 1—0-25% access; Tier 2—26-50% access; Tier 3—51-75% access; Tier 4—76-100% access.

### 3. Percent Reading Below Proficient

“Percent reading below proficient” is defined as the percentage of children districtwide scoring in the minimal or basic categories on the third grade MCT2 administered in 2012-2013.

#### Methodology for Ranking According to Criteria

The preschool collaboratives will first be ranked by the top two criteria (poverty and access) and then by each subsequent criteria (percent reading below proficient). *An example of this ranking is provided at the end of this document.*

1. **Poverty Band**: Preschool collaboratives will be ranked according to their poverty band with Band A collaboratives first and Band E collaboratives last. This means collaboratives with poverty rates in the 85-100% range (Band A) will be ranked highest and collaboratives with less than 40% poverty (Band E) will be ranked lowest.
2. **Access Tier**: Collaboratives will then be ranked according to access tier with Tier 1 collaboratives first and Tier 4 collaboratives last. This means collaboratives with an access percentage in the 0-25% range (Tier 1) will be ranked highest and collaboratives with an access percentage in the 76-100% range (Tier 4) will be ranked lowest.
3. **Poverty Rates and Access Percentage**: Collaboratives will be ranked within their poverty band and access tiers by their actual poverty rates and access percentage: higher poverty rates will be ranked higher; lower access rates will be ranked higher.
4. **Percent Below Proficient**: Preschool collaboratives will be ranked from the collaborative with the highest percent reading below proficient to collaboratives with the lowest percent reading below proficient (a collaborative with a percent reading below proficient closer to 100% will be ranked higher).
5. **Numbering by Band and Tier**: Once the ordering is complete, preschool collaboratives will be assigned a ranking number as follows: beginning with the highest-poverty band (Band A), MDE will number collaboratives in Tiers 1 and 2. Once all of the Tier 1 and 2 collaboratives from Band A are numbered, MDE will number Tier 1 and 2 collaboratives from the Band B. MDE will repeat this process (Tier 1 and 2 collaboratives from Bands C and D, and then Tier 3 and 4 collaboratives from Bands A, B, C, and D, and E) until all collaboratives are assigned a ranking number.

### STEP THREE: ACCEPTANCE OF PRESCHOOL COLLABORATIVES

MDE will accept preschool collaboratives in the order of their ranking until estimated available seats are exhausted. Up to 20% of accepted preschool collaboratives may have nonprofit Lead Partners.

### Estimating Available Seats

MDE estimates funds will allow preschool collaboratives to create approximately 3,134 seats. MDE used the following methodology to reach this estimate:

1. **Available funds:** Mississippi is eligible for \$15M per year and at least 65% of these funds must be used for direct services. This means that at least \$9.75M per year must be used for direct services.
2. **Cost per child:** Mississippi will use a cost-per-child estimate based on the 2013 Head Start per-child cost in Mississippi. This cost estimate is \$6,222.
3. **Cost per child less the local match:** Mississippi estimates that participating preschool collaboratives will make a 1:1 match, meaning the grant-funded per-child cost would be \$3,111.
4. **Total number of children served:** Using the cost-per-child estimate of \$3,111 and a total available funds estimate of \$9.75M, Mississippi expects to serve approximately 3,134 students with grant funds.

### Accepting Preschool Collaboratives

MDE will grant seats to collaboratives according to their ranking until the number of seats proposed by the accepted collaboratives reaches the limit of 3,134 seats. ***Please see the example at this end of this document for more explanation.***

- If MDE reaches the 20% threshold for nonprofits before seats and funds are exhausted, MDE will contact the preschool collaborative and determine whether the collaborative would agree to allow the local school district to serve as the Lead Partner.

## **STEP FOUR: NOTIFICATION**

MDE will notify accepted preschool collaboratives in writing by September 26, 2014.

- Accepted preschool collaboratives will not have to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) prior to the submission of the grant on October 14. Instead, collaboratives will be provided a Model MOU that will serve as the basis for the future MOU. The Model MOU will not include all of the requirements of the grant but will include basic information about the grant.
- If Mississippi wins the grant competition, preschool collaboratives must submit a signed MOU within 180 days to receive grant funds. If the MOU is not submitted by the deadline, MDE will accept the next eligible collaborative.

## **EXAMPLE**

Imagine that 20 districts with the following data apply. You represent the Golf Preschool Collaborative.

Collaborative	Poverty	Poverty Band	Access	Access Tier	% Below Prof
Alpha	95	A	3%	1	54%
Bravo	61	C	54%	3	35%
Charlie	100	A	65%	3	69%
Delta	62	C	80%	4	24%
Echo	83	B	44%	2	57%
Foxtrot	68	C	40%	3	24%
<b>Golf</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>38%</b>
Hotel	92	A	71%	3	57%
India	68	C	40%	2	41%
Juliet	52	D	66%	3	22%
Kilo	82	B	18%	1	53%
Lima	80	B	64%	3	31%
Mike	98	A	70%	3	61%
November	90	A	47%	2	48%
Oscar	82	B	18%	1	46%
Papa	68	C	79%	4	31%
Quebec	100	A	37%	2	41%
Romeo	95	A	3%	1	61%
Sierra	100	A	10%	1	61%
Tango	77	B	27%	2	49%

First, we will sort by poverty band (from A to E) then by access tier (from 1 to 4). Golf is now 9<sup>th</sup> on the list, tied with Kilo and Oscar.

Collaborative	Poverty	Poverty Band	Access	Access Tier	% Below Prof
Alpha	95	A	3%	1	54%
Romeo	95	A	3%	1	61%
Sierra	100	A	10%	1	61%
November	90	A	47%	2	48%
Quebec	100	A	37%	2	41%
Charlie	100	A	65%	3	69%
Hotel	92	A	71%	3	57%
Mike	98	A	70%	3	61%
<b>Golf</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>38%</b>
Kilo	82	B	18%	1	53%
Oscar	82	B	18%	1	46%
Echo	83	B	44%	2	57%
Tango	77	B	27%	2	49%
Lima	80	B	64%	3	31%
India	68	C	40%	2	41%
Bravo	61	C	54%	3	35%
Foxtrot	68	C	40%	3	24%
Delta	62	C	80%	4	24%
Papa	68	C	79%	4	31%
Juliet	52	D	66%	3	22%

Next, within each poverty band and access tier, we sort by the actual poverty rate and the actual access percentage. This does not change Golf's position at all because it was already first in Band B and Tier 1. At the top of the list, though, Sierra and Romeo jumped ahead of Alpha.

Collaborative	Poverty	Poverty Band	Access	Access Tier	% Below Prof
Sierra	100	A	10%	1	61%
Romeo	95	A	3%	1	61%
Alpha	95	A	3%	1	54%
Quebec	100	A	37%	2	41%
November	90	A	47%	2	48%
Charlie	100	A	65%	3	69%
Mike	98	A	70%	3	61%
Hotel	92	A	71%	3	57%
<b>Golf</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>38%</b>
Kilo	82	B	18%	1	53%
Oscar	82	B	18%	1	46%
Echo	83	B	44%	2	57%
Tango	77	B	27%	2	49%
Lima	80	B	64%	3	31%
India	68	C	40%	2	41%
Foxtrot	68	C	40%	3	24%
Bravo	61	C	54%	3	35%
Papa	68	C	79%	4	31%
Delta	62	C	80%	4	24%
Juliet	52	D	66%	3	22%

Finally, we sort by “% Below Proficient” from highest to lowest. Kilo has now jumped ahead of Golf because Kilo’s percentage of students below proficient was higher.

Collaborative	Poverty	Poverty Band	Access	Access Tier	% Below Prof
Sierra	100	A	10%	1	61%
Romeo	95	A	3%	1	61%
Alpha	95	A	3%	1	54%
Quebec	100	A	37%	2	41%
November	90	A	47%	2	48%
Charlie	100	A	65%	3	69%
Mike	98	A	70%	3	61%
Hotel	92	A	71%	3	57%
Kilo	82	B	18%	1	53%
<b>Golf</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>38%</b>
Oscar	82	B	18%	1	46%
Echo	83	B	44%	2	57%
Tango	77	B	27%	2	49%
Lima	80	B	64%	3	31%
India	68	C	40%	2	41%
Foxtrot	68	C	40%	3	24%
Bravo	61	C	54%	3	35%
Papa	68	C	79%	4	31%
Delta	62	C	80%	4	24%
Juliet	52	D	66%	3	22%

Now that we have ordered the list according to the selection criteria, we can apply the final ranking rule. We are looking for the highest-poverty, lowest-access collaboratives. As a result, we will go in the order of their ranking **according to what poverty band and access tier they fall into**. This means we will start with the A1s and A2s then move to the B1s and B2s, the C1s and C2s, and the D1s and D2s. Then we will move

to the A3s and A4s, the B3s and B4s, the C3s and C4s, and finally the D3s and D4s. Golf is now ranked number 7 on the list.

Rank	Collaborative	Poverty Band	Access Tier	Proposed Seats
1	Sierra	A	1	20
2	Romeo	A	1	20
3	Alpha	A	1	40
4	Quebec	A	2	60
5	November	A	2	40
12	Charlie	A	3	20
13	Mike	A	3	20
14	Hotel	A	3	40
6	Kilo	B	1	40
7	Golf	B	1	20
8	Oscar	B	1	60
9	Echo	B	2	100
10	Tango	B	2	80
15	Lima	B	3	20
11	India	C	2	20
16	Foxtrot	C	3	40
17	Bravo	C	3	60
18	Papa	C	4	40
19	Delta	C	4	60
20	Juliet	D	3	20

Re-ordering by ranking number, the list is as follows:

Rank	Collaborative	Poverty Band	Access Tier	Proposed Seats
1	Sierra	A	1	20
2	Romeo	A	1	20
3	Alpha	A	1	40
4	Quebec	A	2	60
5	November	A	2	40
6	Kilo	B	1	40
7	Golf	B	1	20
8	Oscar	B	1	60
9	Echo	B	2	100
10	Tango	B	2	80
11	India	C	2	20
12	Charlie	A	3	20
13	Mike	A	3	20
14	Hotel	A	3	40
15	Lima	B	3	20
16	Foxtrot	C	3	40
17	Bravo	C	3	60
18	Papa	C	4	40
19	Delta	C	4	60
20	Juliet	D	3	20



Let's assume that we have 240 seats to allocate. We would first accept Sierra's 20 seats, leaving us with 220 more seats to allocate (240-20=220). We can then move down the list and accept Romeo (20), Alpha (40), Quebec (60), November (40), Kilo (40), and Golf (20). The waiting list becomes Oscar, Echo, Tango, India, Charlie, Mike, Hotel, Lima, Foxtrot, Bravo, Papa, Delta, and Juliet.

Accepted	Collaborative	Poverty Band	Access Tier	Proposed Seats
1	Sierra	A	1	20
2	Romeo	A	1	20
3	Alpha	A	1	40
4	Quebec	A	2	60
5	November	A	2	40
6	Kilo	B	1	40
7	Golf	B	1	20
<b>Waiting List</b>				
1	Oscar	B	1	60
2	Echo	B	2	100
3	Tango	B	2	80
4	India	C	2	20
5	Charlie	A	3	20
6	Mike	A	3	20
7	Hotel	A	3	40
8	Lima	B	3	20
9	Foxtrot	C	3	40
10	Bravo	C	3	60
11	Papa	C	4	40
12	Delta	C	4	60
13	Juliet	D	3	20

The MDE expects to grant approximately 3,134 seats. The number of collaboratives funded will depend on the number of collaboratives that apply and how many children they propose to serve. Collaboratives may not propose to serve more than 200 children.