

Preschool Development Grant Birth Through Five (PDG B-5) Renewal Grant Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Where can I find Illinois' PDG B-5 Renewal Application?

A: The final application is posted to the GOECD website: earlychildhood.illinois.gov.

Q: Who released the PDG B-5 Renewal Grant Application?

A: The grant was offered by the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), jointly with the U.S. Department of Education (ED).

Q: Who was eligible to apply for the grant?

A: All 46 States awarded a Fiscal Year 2019 Initial PDG B-5 grant were eligible to apply for Renewal grant funding. In addition, Tennessee was allowed to choose whether it would apply to the PDG B- 5 Renewal or the Initial PDG B-5 Grant.

Q: How many states submitted Renewal applications?

A: We have not been provided with this information at this time.

Q: When will Illinois be notified about the grant award?

A: No later than December 31, 2019.

Q: Who submitted the application on behalf of Illinois?

A: The Lead Agency for the grant is the Illinois Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development (GOECD); the Fiscal Agent for the grant is the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE).

Q: What are the purposes of the PDG B-5 Renewal Grant?

A: The purposes of the grant are to:

- Build and expand upon on work in the Initial PDG B-5: Statewide Needs Assessment, Statewide Strategic Plan, Activities to Maximize Parental Choice and Knowledge, Activities to Share Best Practices, and Activities to Improve Overall Quality. Additionally, the Renewal grant asks states to engage in activities focused on Monitoring, Evaluation and Data Use for Continuous Improvement.
- Implement more effective collaboration and coordination among existing early childhood care and education (ECCE) programs in a mixed delivery system across the State.
- More efficiently use existing Federal, State, local, and non-governmental resources to align and strengthen the delivery of existing programs.
- Expand and strengthen partnerships among the wide range of ECCE programs and service partners that make up the B-5 Early Childhood State System.
- Expand parental choice and knowledge about existing programs.

- Enhance school readiness for children from low-income and disadvantaged families, including during children's transition into elementary school by sharing best practices between and among ECE providers.

Q: How is the grant structured?

A: The grant is structured into six activities and includes three areas for bonus points:

- *Activity One:* Refine/enhance thorough statewide birth through five needs assessment of the availability and quality of existing programs/services in the State.
- *Activity Two:* Implement a strategic plan, based on needs assessment results, that recommends collaboration, coordination, and quality improvement activities among existing programs.
- *Activity Three:* Maximize parental choice and knowledge; promote and increase involvement by parents and family engagement in assessment, planning, and implementation in areas affecting families.
- *Activity Four:* Expand efforts to share best practices among early childhood care and education program providers in the State to increase collaboration and efficiency of services.
- *Activity Five:* Improve the overall quality of early childhood care and education programs in the State.
- *Activity Six:* Monitor, evaluate, and use data for continuous quality improvement in all areas.
- *Three Bonus Points Items*
 - Coordinated Application and Eligibility, and Enrollment
 - Infant/Toddler Emphasis
 - Collaborative Transition and Alignment of Birth to the Early Grades

Q: For what amount of funding could Illinois apply?

A: The grant created three different bands of funding for which states could apply: \$10M, \$12.5M, or 15M per year. Each state was assigned a band based on the percentage of young children birth through age five living at 200% of the Federal Poverty Line within the state. Illinois is in the \$15M band. Therefore, Illinois was subject to the following restrictions:

- Award floor = \$5,000,000
- Award ceiling = \$15,000,000* per year for three years
- State match requirement = **minimum of 30%**
- Project period = Three 12-month periods (Federal Fiscal Year 2020, 2021, 2022)

Q: For what amount of funding did Illinois apply?

A: Illinois applied for \$15M to support the work across the six activities and the three bonus point items.

Q: When was the application due?

A: November 5, 2019 before 11:59 PM EST.

Q: When did Illinois submit their application?

A: 11:30AM CST on November 4, 2019.

Q: When will the proposals be reviewed?

A: All proposals will go through federal peer review during the week of November 18-22, 2019, and grants will be awarded no later than December 31, 2019.

Q: How will award and award amounts be determined?

A: Awards and award amounts will be determined through the following process:

- No State with a score below 70 will be eligible to receive a PDG B-5 Renewal award.
- All States, starting with the highest score and moving to the lowest score above 69, will be awarded a grant until all funds are awarded.
- Applications may be funded in whole or in part. Successful applicants may be funded at an amount lower than that requested.
- The actual award amounts will be determined by:
 - the Departments' evaluation of the applicant's rationale and the supporting evidence that the activities can reasonably be accomplished within the one-year grant project period, and
 - the number of applications received, and the amounts requested.
- If necessary, the Departments will work with States that are eligible for an award to make any adjustments before finalizing PDG B-5 awards.

Q: If Illinois is awarded, how will the funds be distributed?

A: As defined by Illinois Tittle 44: Governmental contracts, grantmaking, procurement and property management, Subtitle F, Section 7000.30, Preschool Development Grant B-5 is a discretionary grant. Discretionary grant means an award for which the State or federal agency or passthrough entity may exercise judgement (discretion) in determining the recipient and/or the amount of the award and may be issued under a competitive application process. Illinois has and will follow all relevant federal and state requirements in selecting subrecipients and contractors for this grant; the Simplified Acquisition Threshold of \$250,000 per 45 CFR 75.326-340 and 45 CFR 75.351-353 were applied.

Q: What was the process for developing Illinois' proposal?

A: On August 12th and 26th, GOECD led two Early Learning Council PDG B-5 Planning meetings in anticipation of the release of the Renewal grant funding opportunity announcement (FOA). Both meetings were open to the public and in compliance with the requirements of the Open Meetings Act. Planning meetings were temporarily suspended in September until the Governor's Office and the Illinois State Board of Education affirmed that the PDG B-5 Renewal would be treated as a grant and not a procurement. Therefore, collaboration with partners would not prohibit their participation in the work in the event that Illinois is awarded the grant. GOECD then

convened three additional meetings, each focused around a different early childhood systems building topic that emerged from the June 10th Strategic Visioning and Planning Meeting. The meeting on October 4th focused on improving kindergarten readiness and the P-5 services that support it; the October 9th meeting focused on developing and supporting a well-compensated, competent, and diverse workforce to deliver services to families across settings; and the meeting the October 17th meeting focused on supporting family navigation of Illinois' early care and education system. These meetings were also public and attended by private and public partners from various parts of the system. As was GOECD's structure when applying for the Initial PDG B-5, one staff member led each of the six Activities in the FOA. These Activity Leads engaged groups and individuals in the information gathering stages of the application process. State staff wrote and submitted the final proposal.

Q: If Illinois is awarded, how will stakeholders be engaged?

A: Community, family, and provider voice has been and will continue to be critical to the success of PDG B-5 in Illinois. GOECD outlined stakeholder engagement in each of the six Activities in the Renewal proposal. Individuals can also become involved through the Early Learning Council, as well as through its committees and subcommittees.

Q: Why was the idea I proposed to the planning committee not included in the proposal?

A: The final proposal consists of ideas that met the requirements of the federal Funding Opportunity Announcement, aligned with the three year grant timeframe, and were consistent with the State's vision for early childhood systems development.

Q: Will there be an opportunity to add projects to the grant in later years?

A: While the proposal is written for three years, the budget will be resubmitted annually. Therefore, there may be an opportunity to propose changes to the budget, and ultimately to the following year's work, based on lessons learned and other changes.

Q: Is there a summary available of the ideas proposed in Illinois' application?

A: See below for the Renewal grant's Project Summary/Abstract:

Illinois is committed to ensuring equitable access to high-quality Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) in a mixed delivery system for all children birth to five (B-5). Through its Initial PDG B-5, the State identified significant gaps in both the availability and quality of ECCE services, as well as areas where greater alignment across systems is needed. Through this PDG B-5 Renewal, Illinois will strengthen system alignment and lay the foundation for scaling a high-quality, efficient system that is responsive to families' needs. Illinois' Needs Assessment and Strategic Plan will be updated and enhanced through input from families, stakeholders, and governance bodies, and the plan will serve as a "living document" reflecting our progress.

Illinois' Renewal application reflects a strong emphasis on family engagement with the goal of delivering ECCE services that are responsive to family needs. We will engage families in policymaking through the Family Advisory Committee of the Early Learning Council (ELC). We

will also conduct Parent Cafés built upon protective factors to connect families to services and to each other around topics that reflect expressed interests.

Illinois is prioritizing supports for infants and toddlers in our proposal to expand Coordinated Intake (CI) beyond the existing Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) communities, connecting more families to home visiting (HV), Early Intervention, and other ECCE services. In addition, we will prioritize supports for children and families transitioning from ECCE to kindergarten by scaling local school district and community partnerships implementing promising practices to support the transition.

In the Renewal, Illinois will deepen alignment across professional development (PD) systems to share best practices and will expand both practice-based coaching and evidence-based programs to support children's social/emotional development and address trauma. Workforce development supports, including financial assistance, course modularization, and cohorts for completing degrees and credentials, will build the highly-skilled, diverse ECCE workforce Illinois needs.

Expansion of high-quality early learning opportunities in child care settings will be supported with PDG B-5 Renewal funds through subgrants to support enhanced rates, increased staff compensation, improved staff-to-child ratios, and support for continuous quality improvement (CQI), with a focus on rural areas and programs serving infants and toddlers.

Finally, Illinois' application reflects a commitment to using high-quality data to inform cross-agency decision making. Illinois will standardize ECCE data across systems and construct a platform for replicable, comprehensive analysis; construct a more accurate and comprehensive unduplicated count of children served by publicly-funded systems; and enhance performance measurement of the full ECCE system to support state and local decision-making and improve outcomes for Illinois children and families.