

2016 – 2017 State Pre-K Program RFP Questions and Responses

March 10, 2016

Question 1: Can you provide more information about manage the application process and participate in completing a state-supervised lottery.

Question 2: What is the district's role in managing the application process?

Question 3: Is RIDE doing the lottery or the district?

Answer: The following information, taken directly from the 2015 – 2016 State Pre-K Program Policies, describes in detail, the State Pre-K lottery process and grantee participation in the recruitment, lottery and enrollment process. The state may make revisions to these policies prior to July 1, 2016.

Recruitment Grantees are responsible for developing an approved recruitment plan and completing all activities related to the state pre-kindergarten lottery that lead to the enrollment of children in the pre-kindergarten program lottery. This includes: making applications available to all families, disseminating state pre-kindergarten lottery information and applications to their communities, communicating with interested families in person or via email or phone, providing information to families as requested regarding the state lottery process, entering in lottery application information for families who are eligible and who complete paper applications, and providing family tours of the program during the recruitment and application period.

Lottery Procedures State Pre-K child lottery applications are disseminated online by RIDE each year, prior to the start of the school year. Families can download, print and deliver hard copies of applications as identified below. Pre-K enrollment is determined solely by the state lottery process. To enter their child into the lottery:

- i. Parents can (1) apply online (2) pick up an application at one of the state prekindergarten sites or (3) download an application from the RIDE website. Applications are available in English and Spanish.
- ii. Parents must fill out the entire application and then deliver the application to the state prekindergarten program site which they want their child to attend in the fall or complete the application online. The Pre-K administrator enters the application information on behalf of families who chose to submit a hard copy application into the online lottery database. All hard copy applications must be entered by the receiving Pre-K program prior to the designated lottery day. All families applying online must complete their online application prior to the designated lottery day.
- iii. There is a deadline for completing online or delivering the application to the programs which is noted on the application. The Department of Education does not accept student applications for Pre-K. Applications must be completed online or delivered directly to the participating Pre-K programs.

- iv. Parents may apply at more than one site if multiple sites exist in the community of residence, but only one application per site will be accepted. If selected during the lottery, enrollment will be offered for that site only.

Enrollment Procedures The computerized state-run Pre-K lottery is held prior to the start of the school year. On the day of the lottery, the RIDE Pre-K agent will send each Pre-K program administrator the list of children who were selected and those placed on the waiting list for their program. The Pre-K program administrator is responsible for ensuring that each selected child's family is contacted to confirm each child's selection and to begin the enrollment processes. The Pre-K program administrator will ensure that all required documentation of child eligibility is maintained at the program site and is available for review during the state monitoring process. This documentation must be kept at the program site for the four years. At the end of four years, documentation must be destroyed. All Grantees electronically receive a ranked list of selected children and a ranked list of waitlisted children for their Pre-K program. Additionally, each family that submits a child application will receive a computer-generated email notification from RIDE which communicates whether their child was selected or placed on the waitlist for any Pre-K programs that they applied to and were eligible for.

Verifying Age and Residency Grantees will ensure that children enrolled in the state lottery are four years of age on or before September 1st of the program year, reside in the community where the Pre-K program is located, and confirm that the child will be attending Kindergarten in the same community that the Pre-K program is located within. Grantees are responsible for verifying and documenting eligibility including the child's 1) age (birth certificate), and 2) residency (copy of utility bill with name of parent and address).

Verifying Income Grantees are responsible for verifying and documenting the child's family income. Aggregated child income status information, minus identifying information, is then summarized by classroom and reported to RIDE via the RI Pre-K Child Lottery and Enrollment Eligibility form.

State Pre-Kindergarten Waiting List The state maintains an annual waiting list for enrollment into each state pre-kindergarten program. When a child dis-enrolls from a particular pre-kindergarten program, the Pre-K program administrator contacts the state pre-kindergarten agent to identify the next eligible child on the randomized, ranked enrollment list for that program. The program administrator takes the child information and contacts the families of each eligible child (in ranked order) until a child is identified to take the available pre-kindergarten slot. The program administrator maintains the same enrollment eligibility documentation procedures outlined above throughout the enrollment process.

Question 4: For a current fiscal year's agency/school budget, which breaks out the various sources of revenue to the center or organization, is the school district budget sufficient?

Answer: Yes

Question 5: Evidence of positive learning outcomes for previous classroom participates. Is this for organizations that already have a state funded pre-school?

Answer: Any organization proposing to receive a State Pre-K program grant can provide evidence of positive learning outcomes, not just previous State Pre-K program grantees. Evidence of positive learning outcomes can include: formative assessment data from prior student cohorts such as Teaching Strategies GOLD reports and other standardized measures of child learning.

Question 6: Where will I find the answers to these questions?

Answer: All questions and responses will be posted on the RIDE website Early Childhood Education landing page at <http://www.ride.ri.gov/InstructionAssessment/EarlyChildhoodEducation.aspx>

Question 7: I am interested in the State Pre-K program you are offering. The only issue is that we are in Middletown, RI not Newport. We do service many Newport kids also. Would this be a possibility? We have received many grants in the last 2 years BECAUSE OF BEING a Bright Stars Program. We have thoroughly enjoyed what the state has done for our program. We are in the process of getting bids for our playground and can't wait to see it be utilized as a model for LISC. We just received a technology grant also, so now our assessment piece will be up to standards so we can apply for a 5 star in September 2016. We have been busy. So, with all of this said would we be able to be a state Pre-K?

Answer: Under the federal preschool expansion grant, eligible organizations or entities include licensed child care centers, Head Start programs, public schools, and non-public schools able to operate a classroom in the following Rhode Island communities: Central Falls, Cranston, East Providence, Johnston, Newport, North Providence, Pawtucket, Providence, West Warwick, and Woonsocket. Programs located in other communities are not necessarily prohibited from applying. However, selected programs will only be allowed to enroll children from one of the communities listed above and would have to demonstrate convincingly how the program's location would not be a barrier to children's participation and to the provision services which might be linked to a child's home address, in particular, special education services.

Question 8: Little Red Hen School would like to be considered for the State Pre-K Program RFP. We are located in Warwick. Can we send in a proposal for April 1, 2016?

Answer: Under the 2014 federal Preschool Expansion Grant, the state is required to expand State Pre-K program seats for eligible children in Rhode Island communities with the highest need. RIDE defines highest need using the most recent school district reporting of Kindergarten age children eligible for free or reduced price lunch. School districts, where close to 50% or higher of the kindergarten age children qualify for free or reduced price lunch, are the communities identified as eligible. For the coming school year, the following Rhode Island communities are eligible: Central Falls, Cranston, East Providence, Johnston, Newport, North Providence, Pawtucket, Providence, West Warwick, and Woonsocket. Prior to the grant and under a state Pre-K program expansion plan, Warwick was identified as an eligible community. The state is dedicated to maintaining the current number of State Pre-K seats for Warwick but will not be expanding the number of seats available under the federal expansion grant. Rather, when current State Pre-K contracts in Warwick expire, those contracts will be re-competed. RIDE anticipates re-competing two State Pre-K program contracts for Warwick in FY18.

Question 9: Is it possible for non-public schools to blend funding for the program and have students with special needs, who are funded by their school district, participate in the program?

Answer: Children are selected to attend the State Pre-K program via a random lottery process. State Pre-K program funds pay for all 18 children, with or without disabilities, in every State Pre-K program. The school district, as the Local Educational Agency (LEA) is responsible for providing the special education services for children with IEPs participating in the State Pre-K program within their community. Special education is not a placement rather a set of services to support the child with disabilities in accessing the general curriculum within the State Pre-K classroom.

Question 10: How will the current Bright Stars rating be weighed during the application review process? Will applicants with higher current star ratings be prioritized?

Answer: Bright Stars participation is a contractual requirement that the state expects grantees to meet during their first contract year, as participation reflects a program/school's focus on the general quality of all classrooms. Bright Stars ratings do not impact proposal scoring.

Question 11: What is considered a "competitive salary" for a teacher and a teacher's assistant?

Answer: Competitive salary refers to salaries which are comparable to individuals with similar educational credentials, levels of experience, and levels of responsibility. In the early childhood field, this generally reflects salaries which would be paid to certified teachers employed within public school systems.

Question 12: For task #3 (total number of active enrollment of 18 children) has consideration been made for the number of children with disabilities versus the number of children without disabilities?

Answer: Yes. All children who participate in the State Pre-K program are selected to attend the State Pre-K program via a random lottery process. Grantees are required to recruit all eligible children to enter an application into the child lottery, including children with disabilities. RIDE monitors the numbers of children with disabilities who access the state Pre-K and finds that the percentage is comparable to state and national averages.

Question 13: The sample budget includes one teacher and one teachers assistant, if a program offers services to children with special needs will there be funding for additional staffing to support those students?

Answer: The school district, as the Local Educational Agency (LEA), is responsible for providing special education services for children with IEPs participating in the State Pre-K program within their community. Special education is not a placement rather a set of services to support the child with disabilities in accessing the general curriculum within the State Pre-K classroom. State Pre-K program funding supports the provision of a high quality general education preschool classroom.

Question 14: Will the State Pre-K staff professional development and technical assistance activities (Task 7) be offered during the work day or after work hours? If after work hours will the staff be compensated for their time?

Answer: State Pre-K staff professional development and technical assistance (PDTA) activities are offered both during the work day and after work hours and are designed based on the needs of the entire State Pre-K program staff. A State Pre-K grantee can propose a budget which includes funds, as needed, to compensate staff for their time to participate in required State Pre-K PDTA activities.

Question 15: Are applicants are able to apply for funding for more than one classroom?

Answer: Yes

Question 16: Is there a specific template or outline for the proposal?

Answer: The RFP provides the outline expected for the proposal. All proposals should include all sections and required attachments as defined in the document.