RFA 202107114

Pre-K Expansion Grant

Application

# Application Details and Instructions

1. **Overview of Grant Opportunity**

**Intended Purposes**

Through this application, the Maine Department of Education intends to provide grant funding to School Administrative Units (SAUs) to increase the number of eligible 4-year-olds attending high-quality public pre-kindergarten (pre-k) programming. This funding is provided through Maine’s American Rescue Plan (ARP) allocation. SAUs may apply for grant funding awards for a 1-year period that will support new and expanded programming during the 2022-23 school year. The Maine Department of Education intends to offer, as funds are available, opportunity for SAUs to apply for grant funding to start or expand programming and/or to continue projects funded with pre-k expansion grants during the 2023-24 school year. Per statute ([Title 20-A, Part 3, Chapter 203, Sub-chapter 3-Public Preschool Programs for Children 4 Years of Age](http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/statutes/20-A/title20-Asec4271.html)), preference will be given to SAUs that are seeking to establish public pre-k programming for the first time before awarding grants for expansion of programming. Also, per statute, competitive priority will be awarded based on the percentage of economically disadvantaged students served by the SAU.

All communication regarding this Request for Applications must be made via email to the grant coordinator identified on the [Division of Procurement Service’s Grant RFPs and RFAs webpage](https://www.maine.gov/dafs/bbm/procurementservices/vendors/grants).

SAUs must use grant funding received to start new or expand existing public pre-k programs. Funding may also be used to increase the amount of time 4-year-olds are attending public pre-k programming. This might include extending the program from part day to full day and/or from part week to full week. Programs funded through these grants must be in compliance with the standards governing public pre-k programs in [Maine Department of Education Rule Chapter 124, Basic Approval Standards: Public Preschool Programs](https://www.maine.gov/sos/cec/rules/05/chaps05.htm). SAUs are encouraged to access the [Maine DOE’s Pre-K Guidebook](https://www.maine.gov/doe/sites/maine.gov.doe/files/inline-files/Public%20Pre-K%20Guidebook_1.pdf) as a tool for supporting pre-k programming development.

Only eligible children may be supported by these Pre-K Expansion Grant funds. Eligible children are defined as children who will be at least 4 years of age on October 15 of the school year in which they are enrolled. All proposed general education pre-k classrooms should be inclusive of eligible 4-year-olds, including those who are economically disadvantaged, those with disabilities, and those who are English learners. Children with disabilities must be placed in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) determined by the IEP team. This is beneficial for all children and in compliance with federal and state law.

Programs funded through these grant funds must address demonstrated needs that the applicant SAU documents through a thorough Community Needs Assessment (outlined below). Proposed costs should be reasonable and justifiable. SAUs will be required to document how proposed grant funding will be combined with allocations derived from Essential Programs and Services funding to support increasing the number of 4-year-olds attending public pre-k. SAUs will also be asked to demonstrate how program sustainability will be achieved beyond the period of grant fund availability.

Public pre-k programs may be offered by SAUs on school grounds or at other facilities that pass State childcare licensing requirements. Applicant SAUs are encouraged to partner with licensed community providers (e.g. private preschools, childcare providers, Head Starts, YMCAs, etc.) and/or other SAUs. However, applying SAUs retain responsibility for setting and meeting program goals, ensuring compliance with state and federal laws and rules as evidenced through monitoring and reporting, and maintaining fiscal controls and records. The applicant SAU will serve in the capacity of fiscal agent.

1. **Definition of Terms**

**081 Teacher Certification**:  Birth – 5 educator certification, held by the lead pre-k teacher in each classroom.

**Chapter 124**:  Maine Department of Education’s Basic Approval Standards for Public Preschool Programs.

**Community Needs Assessment**: Study of your community used to inform development of public pre-k programming, including estimate of the number of eligible children in the catchment area, community-based providers, amount of need and desired program designs, and opportunities for establishing partnerships.

**Community Partner**:A licensed childcare provider in your community. Examples include, but are not limited to: ​

* Private family childcare ​
* Private center-based childcare​
* Head Start​
* YMCA​
* Boys and Girls Club of America​

**Full Day/Full Week Programming**: State funded pre-k programming offered 5 days a week which children attend for the hours during which the school is regularly in session (e.g. 8:30-3:00).

**High-Quality**: Providing what research has indicated results in positive outcomes for young children and their families.  High-quality public pre-k programs in Maine meet programming standards outlined in Chapter 124.

**MELDS**:  **M**aine **E**arly **L**earning and **D**evelopment **S**tandards; A compilation of expected academic and developmental learning standards for children ages 3-5.  The MELDs are neither a curriculum nor an assessment but should align with and inform both in early childhood settings.

**MOU**:  **M**emorandum **o**f **U**nderstanding agreement between SAU and any partner outlining each entity’s responsibilities in the partnership.

**Public Pre-K**:  A public pre-k program offered by an approved Maine public school. Public pre-k classrooms must comply with Rule Chapter 124 and be free to all enrolled. In this application, pre-k refers to a public pre-k program.

**Pre-K Eligible Students**:  Refers to children who have turned 4 years old on or before October 15th of the school year they enroll.

**Universal Pre-K**:   Programs with the ability and capacity to serve all 4-year-old students and families in the SAU, whether partnering or not.

**QRIS**: **Q**uality **R**ating and **I**mprovement **S**ystem. ​

**SAU**: **S**chool **A**dministrative **U**nit.

## **Allowable Expenses/Activities**

Funding provided through the Pre-K Expansion Grants is intended to result in increased numbers of 4-year-olds accessing high-quality public pre-k and/or increasing the amount of time in which 4-year-olds access public pre-k programming. Overall, costs must be reasonable and justifiable, support the purposes of the grant program, and align with the pre-k program standards contained in [Maine Department of Education Rule Chapter 124](https://www.maine.gov/sos/cec/rules/05/chaps05.htm).

Allowable expenses/activities for which the funds provided through Pre-K Expansion Grants may be used include:

* Purchase of equipment, materials and supplies necessary for operating high-quality programs (e.g. classroom furniture, instructional materials including evidence-based programs/curricular resources, evidence-based assessments and screening measures, etc.)
* Costs associated with retrofitting classroom spaces to accommodate 4-year-olds
* Costs associated with leasing space for operating classrooms
* Costs associated with establishing or retrofitting playgrounds
* Costs associated with establishing outdoor learning spaces
* Costs associated with provision of snacks/meals
* Costs associated with providing transportation for 4-year-olds (see further guidance in Appendix A).
* In the case of SAUs that are starting full day, full week pre-k programs and/or expanding current pre-k programs from part day/part week to full day/ full week, costs associated only with the salary and benefits for Education Technician positions.
* Costs associated with coordination of public pre-k programming, particularly in the case of programs operated in partnership with community providers
* Costs associated with professional learning related to the provision of high- quality pre-k programming, including support for attainment of required teaching credentials and implementation of instructional programs and assessments
* Indirect costs (unrestricted) which may not exceed the FY 23 proposed percentage rate for the SAU of the total funds requested (contact [Tyler.Backus@maine.gov](mailto:Tyler.Backus@maine.gov) for SAU estimated rate)

## **Application Components**

A complete and scoreable application for Pre-K Expansion Grant funding will include the following components. Specific descriptions of each component are included in the application.

1. **General Information**

SAUs must complete the following documents as part of their application. These documents will be scored with pass/fail scoring based on completion. If there are any failures (i.e. documents not submitted or submitted but not fully completed), the application will not be scored.

* Application Cover Page & General Assurances
* Debarment, Performance and Non-Collusion Certification
* Partner Listing with Letters of Intent from each partner (if applicable)

1. **Needs Assessment and Community Coordination**
2. **Project Overview**
3. **Project Description**

* High-Quality Program Design
* Description of Partnerships (optional)
* Recruitment and Enrollment
* Evaluation
* Sustainability

1. **Budget**

## **Competitive Priorities**

The Department shall award competitive priority points for those proposals meeting the following criteria:

1. **Level of Economic Disadvantage:** Competitive priority points will be awarded to proposals seeking to serve Maine school(s) with high of economically disadvantaged students as indicated by the Department’s Free and Reduced School Lunch Report – ED 534 for FY 2021.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Percentage of school population eligible for Free and Reduced Lunch | Less than 45% | Between 45% and 60% | More than 60% |
| Priority Points | 0 points | 3 points | 5 points |

1. **Pre-K Partnerships with Community Partners**: Competitive priority points will be awarded to proposals seeking to establish a partnership with a licensed community provider to provide pre-k programming to eligible students in the community. Public pre-k partnerships between School Administrative Units and community providers support the expansion of quality public pre-k programming for 4-year-olds by addressing barriers, such as lack of classroom space for schools, while also supporting and leveraging existing community programming and meeting the needs of children and families.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Establishment of a partnership with a community partner | No Partnerships | At least one partnership with a community partner |
| Priority Points | 0 points | 5 points |

1. **Full Day, Full Week Instructional Programming**: Competitive priority points will be awarded to proposals seeking to provide more than the minimum of 10 hours per week of instructional programming. Recent research shows that a full day, full week, high-quality program further improves overall student outcomes.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Number of hours of instructional programming | 10-14 hours per week | 15-19 hours per week | At least 20 hours per week but less than full day/full week | Full day, full week |
| Priority Points | 0 points | 3 points | 4 points | 5 points |

## **Eligibility to Submit Bids**

All Maine School Administrative Units (SAUs) as defined by 20-A M.R.S. §1(26) are eligible to submit bids in response to this Request for Applications. SAUs may apply with the intention of partnering with community providers, but the SAU remains the applicant and must be the fiscal agent for the proposed program.

## **Awards**

The Department anticipates making multiple awards as a result of this Request for Applications. The number and size of awards will depend on the number of proposals received and available funds. Issuance of this RFA in no way constitutes a commitment by the State of Maine to make grant awards. Recognizing there are many variables that will influence proposals, award sizes are estimated to range between $20,000 and $500,000. Applications will be evaluated after the due date, and a Selection Package will be posted to the Division of Procurement Services website. Award amounts in approved grant requests will be finalized in February of 2022 once EPS allocations are finalized. All proposals that meet a combined score of 65 or more points for Criteria 2: Specifications of the Work to be Performed and Criteria 3: Budget Proposal will be considered eligible for funding as it is available. The Department reserves the right to issue partial awards.

Any person aggrieved by the award decision that results from this Request for Applications may appeal the decision to the Director of the Bureau of General Services in the manner prescribed in 5 MRSA § 1825-E and 18-554 Code of Maine Rules, Chapter 120 (found here: [Chapter 120](https://www.maine.gov/dafs/bbm/procurementservices/policies-procedures/chapter-120)).  The appeal must be in writing and filed with the Director of the Bureau of General Services, 9 State House Station, Augusta, Maine, 04333-0009 within 15 calendar days of receipt of notification of contract award.

1. **Statutes**

Pre-k expansion grants are authorized under [Title 20-A, Part 3, Chapter 203, Sub-chapter 3-Public Preschool Programs for Children 4 Years of Age](http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/statutes/20-A/title20-Asec4271.html). Pre-K expansion grants are also included in the priorities as described in the initiative contained in [Public Law 2021 Chapter 483 Part R section 2](http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/bills/getPDF.asp?paper=SP0577&item=16&snum=130).

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# KEY PROCESS EVENTS

## **Informational Meeting**

The Department will sponsor an Informational Meeting concerning the RFA via Zoom on October 7, 2021 from 3:00-5:00 p.m. You can join the meeting by clicking the following link:<https://mainestate.zoom.us/j/85791021333?pwd=cGpXSk14ZWl1bEhQMEZKNG9EdklBQT09>.

The purpose of the Informational Meeting is to answer and/or field questions, clarify for potential Applicants any aspect of the RFA requirements that may be necessary and provide supplemental information to assist potential Applicants in submitting responses to the RFA. Although attendance at the Informational Meeting is not mandatory, it is strongly encouraged that interested Applicants attend.

## **Submitting Questions about the Request for Applications**

Any questions must be submitted by e-mail to the Grant Coordinator identified on the [Grant RFPs and RFAs webpage](https://www.maine.gov/dafs/bbm/procurementservices/vendors/grants) by October 15, 2021 at 11:59 p.m. local time. Submitted Questions must include the subject line: “RFA# 202107114 Questions”. The Department assumes no liability for assuring accurate/complete/on time e-mail transmission and receipt.

Question & Answer Summary: Responses to all questions will be compiled in writing and posted on the following website: [Grant RFPs and RFAs](https://www.maine.gov/dafs/bbm/procurementservices/vendors/grants). It is the responsibility of all interested parties to go to this website to obtain a copy of the Question & Answer Summary. Only those answers issued in writing on this website will be considered binding.

## **Amendments to the Request for Applications**

All amendments (if any) released in regard to this Request for Applications will be posted on the following website: [Grant RFPs and RFAs](https://www.maine.gov/dafs/bbm/procurementservices/vendors/grants). It is the responsibility of all interested parties to go to this website to obtain amendments. Only those amendments posted on this website are considered binding.

## **Submitting your Application**

1. **Applications Due:** Applications must be received by November 4, 2021 at 11:59 p.m. local time. Applications received after the 11:59 p.m. deadline will be ineligible for award consideration for that annual application enrollment period.
2. **Submission Instructions:** Applications are to be submitted to the State of Maine Division of Procurement Services, via email, to [Proposals@maine.gov](mailto:Proposals@maine.gov).
   1. Only applications received by e-mail will be considered. The Department assumes no liability for assuring accurate/complete e-mail transmission and receipt.
   2. E-mails containing links to file sharing sites or online file repositories will not be accepted as submissions. Only e-mail applications that have the actual requested files attached will be accepted.
   3. Encrypted e-mails received which require opening attachments and logging into a proprietary system will not be accepted as submissions. Please check with your organization’s Information Technology team to ensure that your security settings will not encrypt your proposal submission.
   4. File size limits are 25MB per e-mail. Applicants may submit files separately across multiple e-mails, as necessary, due to file size concerns. All e-mails and files must be received by the due date and time listed above.
   5. Applicants are to insert the following into the subject line of their email submission: **“RFA# 202107114 Application Submission – [Applicant’s Name]”**
   6. Applications are to be submitted as a single, typed, PDF or WORD file and must include pages 11-22 of this RFA document.

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# APPLICATION EVALUATION AND SELECTION

## **Scoring Weights and Process**

1. Scoring Weights: The score will be based on a 100-point scale and will measure the degree to which each application meets the following criteria.

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| --- | --- |
| **Scoring Criteria** | **Maximum Points Available** |
| **Criteria 1: General Information**   * Application Cover Page & General Assurances * Debarment, Performance and Non-Collusion Certification * Partner Listing with Letters of Intent from each partner (if applicable) | Pass/Fail |
| **Criteria 2: Specifications of Work to be Performed**   * Needs Assessment and Community Coordination * Project Overview * Project Description * High-Quality Program Design * Recruitment and Enrollment * Evaluation * Sustainability | 60 points |
| **Criteria 3: Budget Proposal**   * Budget Narrative & Budget Forms * Capacity for Success and Sustainability | 25 points |
| **Criteria 4: Priority Points**   * Level of economic disadvantage (max 5 points) * Partnership with community provider(s) (max 5 points) * Full day/full week programming (max 5 points) | 15 points |
| **Total Points** | * + 1. **points** |

1. Scoring Process: The Grant Review Team will use a consensus approach to evaluate and score all sections listed above. Members of the review team will not score those sections individually but, instead, will arrive at a consensus as to assignment of points for each of those sections.

Regarding the proposed funds requested and the proposed work, the Grant Review Team will consider the degree to which the project represents a good return for the investment (money, time) as well as whether the project work and cost estimates (tasks & budget) are reasonable for the expected outcomes, along with the amount and quality of proposed matching funds or services.

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APPLICATION COVER PAGE

**Handwritten Applications Will Not Be Accepted**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **School Administrative Unit (SAU)Name:** | | Click or tap here to enter text. | | | | |
| **Name of Application:** | | Click or tap here to enter text. | | | | |
| **Superintendent’s Name** | | Click or tap here to enter text. | | | | |
| **Tel:** | Click or tap here to enter text. | | | | **E-mail:** | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| **SAU Street Address:** | | Click or tap here to enter text. | | | | |
| **SAU City/State/Zip** | | Click or tap here to enter text. | | | | |
| ***Provide information requested below if different from above*** | | | | | | |
| **Point of Contact for Application- Name and Title** | | | Click or tap here to enter text. | | | |
| **Tel:** | Click or tap here to enter text. | | | | **E-mail:** | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| **Headquarters’ Street Address:** | | Click or tap here to enter text. | | | | |
| **Headquarters’ City/State/Zip** | | Click or tap here to enter text. | | | | |
| **Dollar Amount of Application:** | | | | Click or tap here to enter text. | | |

* No personnel currently employed by the Department or any other State agency participated, either directly or indirectly, in any activities relating to the preparation of the Applicant’s application.
* No attempt has been made, or will be made, by the Applicant to induce any other person or firm to submit or not to submit an application.
* The above-named organization is the legal entity entering into the resulting agreement with the Department should they be awarded a contract.
* The undersigned is authorized to enter contractual obligations on behalf of the above-named organization.
* The undersigned assures that all public pre-k programs proposed in this application will comply with requirements outline in rule Chapter 124: Basic Approval Standards: Public Preschool Programs.

To the best of my knowledge, all information provided in the enclosed application, both programmatic and financial, is complete and accurate at the time of submission.

|  |  |
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| **Name (Print):** Click or tap here to enter text. | **Title:** Click or tap here to enter text. |
| **Authorized Signature:** | **Date:** Click or tap here to enter text. |

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DEBARMENT, PERFORMANCE and NON-COLLUSION CERTIFICATION

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Applicant’s Organization Name:** | Click or tap here to enter text. |

*By signing this document, I certify to the best of my knowledge and belief that the aforementioned organization, its principals and any subcontractors named in this application:*

1. *Are not presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, and declared ineligible or voluntarily excluded from bidding or working on contracts issued by any governmental agency.*
2. *Have not within three years of submitting the application for this contract been convicted of or had a civil judgment rendered against them for:*
   1. *Fraud or a criminal offense in connection with obtaining, attempting to obtain, or performing a federal, state or local government transaction or contract.*
   2. *Violating Federal or State antitrust statutes or committing embezzlement, theft, forgery, bribery, falsification or destruction of records, making false statements, or receiving stolen property;*
   3. *Are not presently indicted for or otherwise criminally or civilly charged by a governmental entity (Federal, State or Local) with commission of any of the offenses enumerated in paragraph (b) of this certification; and*
   4. *Have not within a three (3) year period preceding this application had one or more federal, state or local government transactions terminated for cause or default*.
3. *Have not entered into a prior understanding, agreement, or connection with any corporation, firm, or person submitting a response for the same materials, supplies, equipment, or services and this application is in all respects fair and without collusion or fraud. The above-mentioned entities understand and agree that collusive bidding is a violation of state and federal law and can result in fines, prison sentences, and civil damage awards.*

**Failure to provide this certification may result in the disqualification of the Applicant’s application, at the discretion of the Department.**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Name (Print):** Click or tap here to enter text. | **Title:** Click or tap here to enter text. |
| **Authorized Signature:** | **Date:** Click or tap here to enter text. |

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PARTNERSHIP LISTING

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Applicant’s Organization Name:** | Click or tap here to enter text. |

**If proposing partnerships with community providers to provide public pre-k in your SAU, please complete this form and include it in your application.  Feel free to add additional program information as necessary.** Additionally, each community provider with whom you are proposing to partner needs to complete the intent to partner form (below) and a copy should be submitted with this application.

**List of Potential SAU Public Pre-K Partners**

We have assessed our community needs and have identified the following community providers as potential partners for providing public pre-k programming in our SAU.  It is our interest and intent to work toward universal pre-k in our community by forming pre-k programming partnerships with the following program(s):

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Identified Potential Partner #1** | |
| **Program Name:** |  |
| **Contact Person:** |  |
| **Address:** |  |
| **Phone Number:** |  |
| **E-Mail:** |  |
| **Partner’s organizational capacity and qualifications** | |
|  | |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Identified Potential Partner #2** | |
| **Program Name:** |  |
| **Contact Person:** |  |
| **Address:** |  |
| **Phone Number:** |  |
| **E-Mail:** |  |
| **Partner’s organizational capacity and qualifications** | |
|  | |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Identified Potential Partner #3** | |
| **Program Name:** |  |
| **Contact Person:** |  |
| **Address:** |  |
| **Phone Number:** |  |
| **E-Mail:** |  |
| **Partner’s organizational capacity and qualifications** | |
|  | |

**INTENT TO PARTNER--COMMUNITY PARTNER ASSURANCE**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Community Provider Name:** | | Click or tap here to enter text. | | | |
| **Community Provider Contact:** | | Click or tap here to enter text. | | | |
| **Tel:** | Click or tap here to enter text. | | | **E-mail:** | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| **Provider Street Address:** | | Click or tap here to enter text. | | | |
| **Provider City/State/Zip** | | Click or tap here to enter text. | | | |
| **Type of Program:** | | Click or tap here to enter text. | | | |
| **Childcare License #:** | | Click or tap here to enter text. | | | |
| **QRIS Level:** | | | Click or tap here to enter text. | | |

It is our interest and intent to engage in a pre-k partnership with (Insert SAU name).  We have coordinated with (Insert SAU name) and are in the process of building a community partnership to support public pre-k for the students and families in this catchment area.  If (Insert SAU name) is successful in its grant application, we will work toward development of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to support this partnership.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Name (Print):** Click or tap here to enter text. | **Title:** Click or tap here to enter text. |
| **Authorized Signature:** | **Date:** Click or tap here to enter text. |

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APPLICATION

The Applicant is asked to be brief and concise in providing written information required in the application.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Project Title**  Provide a descriptive project title in 15 words or less | |
| Click or tap here to enter text. | |
| **School Years during which Grant Funding will be Utilized** | |
| \_\_\_\_\_School Year 2022-23 | |
| **Duration of Project** | |
| Anticipated Start Date: Start Date | Anticipated End Date: End Date |
| **Overview of the Project** | |
| The project overview should clearly describe the project’s intended goals, including indication of which of the following strategies the SAU will be engaging in:   * Starting a public pre-k program * Expanding a public pre-k program by adding classrooms * Expanding a public pre-k program from part day/part week programming to full day/full week programming   The overview should describe the status of public pre-k in the SAU currently and summarize the proposal for increasing enrollment and/or dosing beginning in the 2022-23 school year. If increasing enrollment, the number of additional students projected to be served and the number of additional classrooms being added should be clearly indicated along with the proposed programming schedule. If increasing the amount of weekly programming time to full day/full week, the proposed schedule that documents this increase should be included along with a description of any increases in the number of classrooms needed and/or partnerships needed to support full day/full week programming.  *. over homeless program eligibility and best interest placement decisions.* | |
| Click or tap here to enter text. |  |
| **Identification of Need and Community Coordination** | |
|  | |
| The proposal should include a description of the needs of the SAU related to the provision of public pre-k and of how the needs of the SAU have been identified and will be re-evaluated on a regular basis. The SAU should outline how the funding will enable them to overcome identified barriers related to the provision of public pre-k and to equitably serve eligible four-year-olds in their SAU. Demographics of the SAU (e.g. free and reduced meal rates, rates of children served by CDS, percentage of children in SAU identified for special education, percentage of English learners, etc.) should be provided. Consideration of the following factors must also be evident:   * Demonstrated coordination with other early childhood programs and agencies serving children and families in the community to maximize resources, * Consideration of the extended childcare needs of working parents, * Provision of public notice regarding the proposal to the community being served, including the extent to which public notice has been disseminated broadly to other early childhood programs in the community; and * Demonstrated coordination with Child Development Services (CDS).   The SAU should build a case for how the proposed project will address identified needs and lead to better outcomes for children and families. | |
| Click or tap here to enter text. | |
| **Project Description**  Please provide a thorough description of the project you are proposing in order to address these needs. | |
| The description must include the following:  **High-Quality Program Design**  The proposal will include a description and documentation to show how it will start, expand, and/or increase the amount of weekly programming time for 4-year-olds in the SAU. The description will include, but not necessarily be limited to, inclusion of the following:   * Number of additional students estimated to be served, estimated number of new classrooms, and the estimated ratio of children/teachers per classroom. * Length of school day and number of days students will attend per week. * Description of where the program will be housed and how the space will adhere to requirements in Chapter 124 and/or be licensed through Maine’s Child Care Licensing system. * Description of the evidence-based curriculum and assessment system that align with Maine’s Early Learning and Development Standards or a plan for how these decisions will be made prior to opening programs. * Description of the multi-tiered system of support and plans for inclusion, including   + evidence-based methods for meeting the needs of students with disabilities and English learners within the regular classroom setting   + evidence-based methods for utilizing culturally sustaining practices   + coordinated participation by staff in IEP processes and meetings   + collaboration among teachers, special education staff and intervention teams built into the schedule * Description of plan for staffing that meets required credentials. * Description of professional learning for pre-k instructional staff and administration. * Description of coordination and management plan for pre-k programming. * Description of family engagement strategies that will be incorporated, including how families will be informed about students’ progress. * Description of transitions strategies that will be utilized as children enter and exit pre-k. * If applicable, a description of plans for operating in partnership that outlines what each partner will contribute to achieving high-quality programming. A formal MOU will be needed prior to opening programs but is not required for the application.   **Partnerships (optional)**  SAUs are strongly encouraged to collaborate with partners to provide public pre-k programming. Partnerships often enable SAUs to achieve full day/full week programming for children and to meet the needs of working families. A partnership is characterized by meaningful involvement in the planning, development, and delivery of the proposed program for students and families. Eligible community providers with whom SAUs may partner must be licensed by Maine’s Child Care Licensing division and should have demonstrated experience related to the provision of early care and education for 4-year-old children. More information regarding formation of public pre-k partnerships can be found in Appendix B.  Applicants proposing to develop pre-k programming in partnership with a community provider should describe the nature of the collaboration between the SAU and the partner(s). This description should provide an outline of what each partner will contribute to the successful outcome of the programming, including   * name of the partner organization(s), * roles and responsibilities of each partner (SAU and community provider), * details about staffing for the partnership Pre-K classroom, * information about the classroom space, and * for partnerships with licensed child care providers, a copy of the partner’s Quality Rating and Improvement System certificate documenting achievement of at least a level 3 out of 4 on the current four-step scale or of at least a 4 out of 5 on the star rating scale or other documentation demonstrating the community partner will meet Chapter 124 requirements.   **Recruitment and Enrollment**  Proposals should include a description of the methods the SAU and any partners will use to recruit children for the program, including strategies for attracting hard to reach families. If the program being proposed is universal (i.e. it will be able to serve all eligible 4-year-old in its catchment area), this should be clearly noted. If the program will not be universal, a copy of the SAUs enrollment policy or a description of what will be included in the SAU’s enrollment policy for public pre-k should be included. Enrollment policies should demonstrate an inclusive approach and a commitment to serving children from economically disadvantaged families, children with disabilities, and children who are English learners. Enrollment policies should show evidence that the make-up of pre-k classrooms will mirror, to the greatest extent possible, the demographics of the SAUs K-12 population and be responsive to identified needs within the community.  **Evaluation**  Proposals should include a description of how the SAU will evaluate the implementation and effectiveness of the public pre-k program. This plan should include methods for collecting information that will be useful to program development and ongoing improvement, including opportunity to plan for individual children’s needs, track children’s growth across domains of development, and provide timely and actionable feedback to teacher. SAUs are strongly encouraged to utilize structured observation tools and performance-based assessments in addition to developmental screeners and diagnostic tools. SAUs will indicate in the assurances section of their application compliance with Chapter 124 which requires participation in ongoing technical assistance, including classroom observations. Aggregate data collected through these observations will be shared with SAUs to help inform program development efforts.  **Sustainability**  Proposals will include a description of how the SAU and, if applicable, its partners will ensure sustainability of pre-k programming started or expanded through the Pre-K Expansion Grant funding following the grant period. This description should include an explanation of how the SAU will work to secure necessary funding and continue to meet the program standards outlined in Maine Department of Education rule chapter 124.  Click or tap here to enter text.   |  | | --- | | **Project Budget** |   This budget should include overall projected expenses for the proposed project*.* The proposed budget for start-up and/or expansion of public pre-k programming by the SAU should include only allowable costs under this grant program. Costs should be reasonable and justifiable for achieving high-quality programming and meeting program standards. The project budget worksheets should be completed and should include descriptions of how projected costs were determined. Estimation of the number of students to be served in the proposed project must be provided. Estimated state/local allocation funding and other sources of revenue should be included to demonstrate how funding sources will be combined to support programming and should demonstrate forward thinking toward sustainability. Estimated state/local allocation per student figures can be obtained by contacting [Tyler.Backus@maine.gov](mailto:Tyler.Backus@maine.gov).  **Budget Worksheet**    Complete budget tables 1-3.    **Budget Table 1—School Year 2022-23**     |  |  | | --- | --- | | **Projected Enrollment & Classroom Space** | **Number** | | Estimated **total** number of pre-k students included in proposed project |  | | * Estimated number of **new** students enrolling in part-time programming |  | | * Estimated number of **new** students enrolling in full day/full week programming |  | | * Estimated number of students shifting from part-time to full-time programming |  | |  |  | | Estimated number of **new** classroom spaces |  |     **Budget Table 2—School Year 2022-23:**    Document and provide explanation for expenses in each budget category.     |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | **Budget Category** | **Amount Budgeted** | **Explanation of Expenses** | | Personnel (salary and benefits) for teacher(s) |  |  | | Personnel (salary and benefits) for education technicians(s) |  |  | | Instructional materials and supplies |  |  | | Classroom equipment and non-instructional materials and supplies |  |  | | Playground equipment and outdoor learning spaces |  |  | | Retrofitting classroom spaces |  |  | | Space lease costs |  |  | | Meal/snack Provision |  |  | | Transportation |  |  | | Professional Development |  |  | | Coordination of programming |  |  | | Other (specify) |  |  | | Indirect costs |  |  | | **Total Amount Budgeted** |  |  | | **Less Additional**  **Allocation**  **(State/Local)**  **FY23** |  |  | | **Less Additional Federal Funding FY23** |  |  | | **Less Additional Partner Funding FY 23** |  |  | | **Pre-K Expansion Grant Request** |  |  |       **Budget Table 3—School Year 2022-23**  Show allocation of funding sources across each budget category. Be sure that only allowable costs are allocated to Pre-K expansion grant funds.   |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | **Budget Category** | **Additional**  **Allocation**  **(State/Local)**  **FY23** | **Federal Funds FY 23 (specify)** | **Partner Contributions**  **FY23** | **Pre-K Expansion Grant** | | Personnel (salary and benefits) for teacher(s) |  |  |  |  | | Personnel (salary and benefits) for education technicians(s) |  |  |  |  | | Instructional materials and supplies |  |  |  |  | | Classroom equipment and non-instructional materials and supplies |  |  |  |  | | Playground equipment and outdoor learning spaces |  |  |  |  | | Retrofitting classroom spaces |  |  |  |  | | Space lease costs |  |  |  |  | | Meal/snack Provision |  |  |  |  | | Transportation |  |  |  |  | | Professional Development |  |  |  |  | | Coordination of programming |  |  |  |  | | Other (specify) |  |  |  |  | | Indirect costs |  |  |  |  | | **Totals** |  |  |  |  |        |  | | --- | | **Budget Narrative**    In the space below, please provide a detailed explanation of your proposed project expenses and how the proposed grant funding will be combined with other revenue sources to support the project. Provide explanation of how the project will be sustained beyond the 2022-23 school year, what additional funding sources may be necessary to support implementation, and potential funding sources that could be utilized. | | Click or tap here to enter text. | | |

**Appendix A: Transportation Guidance**

When starting or expanding public Pre-K classrooms, it is highly recommended that SAUs consider transporting students to and/or from school as well as to and/or from their residence or childcare setting. Providing transportation in public Pre-K is not required, however, research has shown that schools who provide transportation for their preschool students often experience higher levels of attendance, thereby increasing student outcomes ([North Carolina Early Childhood Foundation, 2019](https://www.attendanceworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/NCECF_report-attendancecounts-2019_digital-090719.pdf)).

If a school transports public preschool children, it is recommended that the standard of care offered to public preschool students meet the standard of care as defined by ["Guideline for the Safe Transportation of Preschool Age Children in School Buses,”](https://one.nhtsa.gov/people/injury/buses/guide1999/prekfinal.htm) which is provided by the National Highway Transportation Safety Agency.  In order to implement the recommendations set forth in this guideline, SAUs may consider the following transportation-related expenses in their grant applications:

1. The purchase and installation of Child Safety Restraint Systems (suitable for children's weight and age) that meet applicable [Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards (FMVSSs)](https://www.nhtsa.gov/laws-regulations/fmvss)
2. The installation of bus seats with lap belts or child restraint anchorages as instructed by the school bus manufacturer.
3. Payment (or stipend) to have an additional adult’s presence on the bus for the purpose of student safety and positive behavior/oversite.
4. Additional bus routes (i.e. mid-day runs) to accommodate the hours of operation of the proposed Pre-K program.

**Appendix B: Public Pre-K Partnerships Guidance**

**Background:**

Public Pre-K partnerships between School Administrative Units (SAUs) and community programs support the expansion of quality public Pre-K programming for four-year-olds by addressing barriers for schools, such as lack of classroom space,  while also supporting and leveraging existing community programming and meeting the needs of children and families.Community programs and SAUs can work together to attain the goal of providing public Pre-K to more, if not all, four-year-olds in their communities.  Many eligible children may already be served in community programs.  The goal is not to remove children from these locations, but rather to provide the additional funding and support to increase program quality in order to meet the needs of Pre-K aged students and their families.

For additional information about Pre-K Partnerships beyond what is contained below in this appendix, please refer to the Maine DOE’s [Public Pre-K Guidebook](https://www.maine.gov/doe/sites/maine.gov.doe/files/inline-files/Public%20Pre-K%20Guidebook_1.pdf). The section highlighting collaborations and partnerships begins on page 11. Additionally, at the bottom of page 11 there is a link to the three-part professional learning series the Department created as a resource for interested partners.

**Public Pre-K Partnerships:**

* **Public Pre-K partnerships require a collaboration between a school administrative unit (SAU) and a local Head Start and/or a local licensed childcare provider which is formalized in a contractual relationship established through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).**All programs are required to meet the same standards laid out in Chapter 124, including class size maximums, facilities requirements and staffing.  In addition, public Pre-K programs established in partnership with a local Head Start program need to continue to meet the requirements set by the federal government.  Partnerships can also be established with local licensed childcare programs demonstrating quality early care and education. The Maine Department of Education strongly encourages partnerships with programs that are rated as a step 3 or 4 on Maine’s Quality Rating and Improvement System.  Public Pre-K programs established in partnership with licensed childcare programs need to meet the childcare licensing requirements set by the Office of Child and Family Services in the Department of Health and Human Services.

* **Regardless of location, the SAU is responsible for program implementation and quality.**Oversight to ensure the implementation of the high-quality program rests with the school administrative unit.  Partnership programs will be included in the schedule for site visits conducted by Maine DOE’s Early Childhood Monitor.

* **In these partnerships, state funding for the cost of programming flows through the school administrative unit.** Eligible SAUs receive state funding for each enrolled public Pre-K student through the EPS formula and in turn fund collaborating programs. Those dollars are to be used to operate the public Pre-K program and meet the required program standards.

* **Childcare and Head Start teachers in public Pre-K partnership classrooms do not have to be employees of the SAU and typically are not.**Although teachers in collaborating programs must meet the same standards as school administrative units, they typically remain childcare or Head Start employees.   An SAU may choose to employ the Pre-K teachers located in a childcare or Head Start.  Staffing arrangements and expectations should be part of the Memorandum of Understanding established between the SAU and the community program.  Maine DOE encourages school administrative units to consider attaining or getting close to pay parity for Pre-K teachers who are not employed by a school.

**Steps to Collaboration**

* **Determine your community’s Pre-K universe and existing programming for 4-year- olds.**Conduct a local community assessment to identify existing early childhood education and special education services being provided to Pre-K-age children and their families, and to determine existing gaps.  Assure that methods for collecting local community assessments are accessible and culturally responsive, (e.g. translation services if needed, outreach through multiple means, etc.). Survey parents with young children regarding their needs for care and their desires for educational opportunities for their young children.  Examine recent kindergarten enrollment numbers to estimate your potential Pre-K population

* **Assess building facilities.**All Pre-K classrooms, regardless of where they are located, are required to be a minimum of 35 feet per enrolled child, must be accessible for children with disabilities and must be within 40 feet of a bathroom.   Identifying classrooms in district facilities will provide districts with an idea of how many young children can participate in an in-district program, and approximately how many classrooms will be required in community settings.

* **Contact childcare and Head Start providers.**Childcare and Head Start programs provide education and care to children from birth through age five in most communities.  These programs should have been identified in your community needs assessment.  Licensed child care programs can be found at the community level on the Child Care Choices website at <https://search.childcarechoices.me/>  Maine Head Start Grantees can be found on the DOE Head Start Collaboration Website at <https://www.maine.gov/doe/learning/earlychildhood/headstart/grantees>

* **Meet with potential community partners.**If providers meet the classroom facilities requirement, employ or are willing to hire teachers with appropriate training and education levels, and express interest in collaborating with the SAU, a meeting between them and administrators should be scheduled. Holding the initial meeting at the childcare or Head Start program allows staff to see first-hand the state of the facility, and assess the available classroom space, program operations and leadership capacity. Keep in mind that, while classrooms may not represent high-quality when you visit, the infusion of state funding provides ample resources for materials, supplies, curriculum, and professional development that will be a first step in raising the level of quality. Centers can contract for existing or new classroom space. The contracting classrooms must serve district residents and meet program standards.

**Frequently Asked Questions**

1. **How do SAUs plan a budget for administering a contract with Head Start or childcare center?** Both the SAU and the community program should determine anticipated expenses for operating the program. The SAU should determine relevant costs for program oversight and providing other services such as transportation, nursing, and professional development.  The community program should calculate costs for operating the Pre-K program such as salaries, overhead (rent, utilities), classroom supplies and materials, etc. Once those costs are determined, the SAU and provider should meet to agree upon an appropriate rate based on program and SAU expenses.  SAUs and community partners will have to determine how the two streams of funding will be blended and/or braided together to cover the overall cost of the program.  This agreement can vary greatly from partnership to partnership across the state depending upon exact expenses and the kind of community partner involved in the partnership.  In partnerships with Head Start agencies, the schools and the Head Start program may choose to pay for different expenses.  For example, the Head Start may be responsible for providing the materials in the classroom while the school covers the cost of transportation.  In childcare facilities where parents are paying for the cost of care and education for their children, it is important to note that there should be no cost for parents for the time the children are participating in a public pre-K program.  This should be taken into consideration when determining the cost per child in a partnership with a private childcare facility or private preschool.

1. **Do classrooms in Head Start and Private Providers have to be new/empty classrooms that are brand new?** No, existing classrooms in a Head Start and/or Private Provider can be considered expansion if they adhere to Chapter 124.

1. **Are school districts that contract with private providers required to submit additional documentation?** Yes, once memorandums of understandings between the community partner and the SAU are finalized, SAUs should submit a copy to Nicole Madore at the Department at [Nicole.madore@maine.gov](mailto:Nicole.madore@maine.gov).