



United States Department of Health and Human Services
United States Department of Education



**Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five (PDG B-5)
Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA)**

Q&A

10/23/18

Note: The recording of the PDG B-5 FOA webinar is now available at:
<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/occ/resource/pdg-b-5-initiative>, as is a copy of this Q&A document.

Governor-Designated State Lead Entity

1. When is the Governor's letter required? At the time of application or before?

Because the peer reviewers can only review what is submitted as part of the application package, the Governor's letter must be submitted as part of that application package, even if such a letter was sent separately before the application's submission.

2. Can the State entity chosen by the Governor to be the lead entity for this grant be a non-governmental entity? Can a university be designated by the Governor as the lead for the Year I activities of the PDG B-5 funding opportunity?

In addition to being a State government agency, a "State entity" can also be a non-profit, nongovernmental entity, as long as the Governor also provides the required description of why the State entity chosen is best suited to successfully oversee and manage the grant, and facilitate collaboration and coordination among the full range of programs, services, and funding streams, thereby leading to the improvement of an early childhood care and education mixed delivery system serving children from birth through age five.

3. In reference to the Governor's letter of support, who is addressed in this correspondence?

A Governor's letter referencing the PDG B-5 grant and explaining the rationale behind the designation of the lead agency will be accepted regardless of to whom it is addressed. However, the Governor's letter is more than a standard "letter of support". It must not only designate the lead entity, but also explain why that lead entity was deemed most appropriate to carry out your statewide B-5 collaborative effort (see exact language on page 4 and page 15 of the FOA under Program Requirements and Application Disqualification Factor, respectively).

Activities 1-5 and Other Requirements

4. Can the needs assessment' include the State's governance structure (state and local), funding mechanisms, workforce capacity, and other system needs, in addition to assessment of the availability and access to early learning services?



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The State can decide how broad to make its needs assessment and can include any and all elements that make-up or impact the State's B-5 Early Childhood, as defined in the FOA on page seven (7).

5. Does an applying State have to have the needs assessment completed or just a plan for the needs assessment and the strategic plan?

Please revisit pages 3, 5-6, 26-28, and 47-48 of the FOA for a description of what is required regarding the needs assessment and strategic plan, both for the application and during the course of the year.

6. How would an applying State find out if the State has already conducted a B-5 Needs Assessment?

Each State probably has a different approach to provide an answer to this question, but you might start by reaching out to your State Early Childhood Advisory Council or similar body, or to the state entity selected by the Governor that will have lead responsibility for development of the application and execution of this grant, if awarded.

7. The FOA places a clear emphasis on identifying, to the extent practicable, an unduplicated count of children being served in existing programs, as well as the children awaiting service. The counts of children in the different programs can change from month to month. Is the FOA seeking an unduplicated count for one point in time, or is the intent to have a mechanism that measures the unduplicated count from the grant period going forward. Does the unduplicated count have to be obtained using administrative data, or can surveys or other methods be used to obtain this count?

Because there is no definition of the term "unduplicated count" in the FOA and lack of specificity of what is meant by that term elsewhere in the document, the State is free to define what is meant and how that count is achieved based on what would be most helpful and meaningful to the State.

8. If an applying State is not requesting funding for anything related to Activity 5, should the State still budget for and undertake actions that would accomplish these goals within Activities 3 and 4?. Or, should such a state focus only on *identifying* our intentions and approach for improving parent knowledge and choice and increasing the sharing of best practices?

Please read and re-read the FOA carefully. If it is not specifically stated, States have flexibility to decide how best to proceed.

- The amount requested for Activity 5 should be based on the projected amount of time remaining in the year once the needs assessment and strategic plan are completed, submitted and approved, (see pages 3-6, 12, and 49).
- Even though there might be activities identified in a State's strategic plan based on maximizing parental knowledge (Activity 3) and sharing best practices (Activity 4), States



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will be able to expend funds immediately on Activities 3 and 4, as proposed in their application.

- There are not clear distinctions between Activities 3, 4, and 5 – so there may or may not be crossover, as determined by the State.
- While States may spend funds immediately on Activities 1-4, States may not spend funds on Activity 5 until Activities 1 and 2 are completed and approved by HHS/ED.

9. Does "sharing best practices" include training and professional development, or does that fit within Activity 5, improving overall quality?

Please revisit pages 4-5, 29, and 48-49 of the FOA. States have the flexibility to describe both Activities 4 and 5, and determine where these activities best fit. To the degree that there is not specific guidance or requirements, States are given flexibility and latitude to decide.

10. Does "best practices" mean "evidence-based?"

Revisiting the definition of "evidence-based" on page 7 of the FOA may help States answer this question. Since the FOA does not include a definition for "best practices", the State may provide its own definition and supporting narrative.

11. Does Activity 5 allow creation and expansion of early childhood programs/classrooms/slots?

No creation or expansion of early childhood programs/classrooms/slots is allowed as part of this PDG B-5 Initial Grant.

12. Will there be opportunity for funding to support the development of physical spaces (i.e., classrooms) for children?

The PDG B-5 Initial Grant does not allow for funding for the renovation or development of physical spaces or facilities.

13. Does "mixed delivery" mean the State has different entities providing services like Head Start, Pre-K and Child Care or does it mean the entities are braiding or layering their funding or perhaps, it means both?

Please revisit the definition of mixed delivery on page 8 of the FOA. Also revisit "Program Purposes" on page 2, "Program Approach" on pages 4-5, and "State B-5 Mixed-Delivery System Description and Vision Statement" on pages 25-26 and 49-50.

14. The FOA defines an early B-5 Early Childhood State System broadly, and includes child health and nutrition programs. Are child nutrition and other child health and well-being related services a priority for this grant funding, or should the emphasis be on the coordination of Head Start, Pre-K, and Child Care?



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In addition to the definitions referenced above, which are key to the narrative to be developed, please revisit the Executive Summary, the Program Purposes, Program Activities, Program Requirements, and Program Approach pages 1-6, as well as the Project Description pages 23-38. States have the flexibility to identify system priorities as they determine, based on their Needs Assessment findings.

15. Is it allowable for States to include license-exempt child care providers within their definition of a mixed delivery system?

As to the questions related to the description of the State's mixed delivery system, please re-read the Program Purposes on page 2), Program Approach on pages 4-6), the Definitions on pages 7-8, as well as and the Criteria for the State B-5 Mixed Delivery System Description and Vision Statement on pages 49-50. The State defines the mixed delivery system that exists and the one it hopes to develop, and whether it will include licensed, voluntarily registered, legally exempt. There are no Federal rules about what programs or provider types must get defined or included other than what is explicitly stated in the FOA.

16. Can this grant funding be used to expand services to those children who are currently in early care and education programs if they fall under the criteria of Activities 3-5? For example, is expanding the use of a curriculum or other initiative that seeks to support children currently in early childhood settings an acceptable use of the funds?

The PDG B-5 Initial Grant funds cannot be used to directly serve new or existing children. Please revisit the description of Activities, 3, 4, and 5 on pages 3-4, 28-29, and 48-49 for an answer to your question. The specific example mentioned of expanding the use of curriculum might fit within Activity 4 or 5, depending on how it is described/envisioned.

17. The application indicates that States must indicate the amount of grant funding that will be used to support related technical assistance activities leading to successful implementation of grant requirements. Could this be interpreted as targeting funding for technical assistance to programs that are identified in Activities 1-5?

As stated above, the language in the FOA states that "The applicant must also indicate the amount of their grant funding that will be used to support related technical assistance activities leading to successful implementation of grant requirements." The State is free to determine what this means after revisiting the description of each Activity 1 through 5.

18. How should States determine appropriate "cost indicators" (referenced in the second bullet on page 31 of the FOA related to program performance evaluation)?

Please revisit the full description of the "Program Performance Evaluation Plan" section on pages 30-31 and note that States are required to describe an approach to develop a program performance evaluation plan that shall ultimately address each of the bullets. States will have



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the opportunity to revisit this program performance evaluation plan as the grant year progresses.

Application Organization

- 19. On page 18 there's a listing of the application contents, in a particular order. Then on page 24 there's narrative describing what should go in the application, which is in a different order. Then on page 47 the description of what the reviewers are looking for tracks the order on page 18. In what order should States address the various required items?**

Peer reviewers will be instructed to give credit for content in whatever order it is provided and they are reminded that content need not follow any particular order. The reviewer must answer the question: Did the applicant sufficiently address each of the sub-criteria within each criterion section, regardless of where that content is located in the application document?

- 20. In addition to the letter from the Governor and the organization charts, may the applicant include other items in the appendix (i.e. the second file), such as letters of support, as long as it does not exceed the 8-page limit?**

The 8 page limit to the appendix is just a suggested limit. States may include other items in the appendix if you believe this will strengthen the application. The essential point to keep in mind is that the application cannot exceed 75 pages total, including the appendices.

- 21. What are the requirements around font size?**

Please revisit pages 16-23 of the FOA, Section IV.2. Content and Form of Application Submission.

- 22. Do states need to specifically address the Post-Award Reporting Requirements on page 6 of the FOA?**

States do not need to specifically address the Post-Award Reporting Requirements in the application. Please revisit page 6, which provides guidance as to when States awarded a grant may hear about what data may be requested for collection for a final report, should OMB approve.

Coordination with Additional Organizations or Individuals

- 23. The application places a heavy emphasis on partnerships to coordinate and execute the program plan. Should the partner entities named in a State's application be included in the federal funding terms? If the partner entities are not specifically named in the funding terms, can HHS/ED confirm that there is no conflict of interest that prevents the partner entities named in an application from applying for funding provided through this award?**

The federal PDG B-5 Initial Grant is awarded to the State entity designated by the Governor. It is the responsibility of the State to identify and implement third party agreements or other partnership establishment protocols that will lead to the implementation of what is described in



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the State's application. If the question is also about sub-granting, sub-granting is not an option in this Initial Grant competition.

24. Who should States identify in a third party agreement? Is it government agencies, external entities, or both? Would it be appropriate for entities who can help with the required State match?

A 3rd party agreement might be for any or all of the reasons identified and more. The State decides if third-party agreements are necessary, and, if so, with whom, how many, and for what purposes.

25. At the top of page 19 of the FOA, there is a list of the components to be included in the project description. This list omits the dissemination plan, third-party agreements, and plan for federal oversight of federal award funds as referenced on page 32 of the FOA. Does the full project description need to include these additional elements?

While it is true that these three items are not explicitly listed as components to be included in the project description at the top of page 19, they are included in the requirements listed on page 32.

- The Plan for Oversight of Federal Award Funds may be included in the Budget and Budget Justification section.
- The Dissemination Plan may be included in the Approach or Timeline sections.
- Both plans might also be included in other sections, should the applicant feel their placement is better served elsewhere.
- The Third-Party Agreements are only required if the State determines that such agreements are necessary, and, either way, the State must describe why this is or is not so – and can choose to provide this information in whatever section it deems most appropriate, possibly in the Organizational Capacity and Management Section. If included, the State can determine the content and format.

26. Under the approach section on page 25 of the FOA, it states that consultants should be listed. State procurement rules may require that the State issue an RFP for consultants and there may be concern about naming them in the application. Can States describe a process for how the consultants are selected rather than name the consultants?

A State that has procurement rules that prevent the identification of consultants by name at the time of the application should state those procurement rules as the reason why such information cannot be provided and describe the process for how those consultants will be identified once the required protocol is followed.



Budgeting and Funding

27. In terms of timeline and budgeting, how much time should States allocate for the review and approval process for the Needs Assessment and Strategic Plan once submitted to HHS/ED?

Please read bottom of page 5 of Funding Opportunity Announcement for info about the timeline for review of the needs assessment and strategic plan.

28. Does match need to be new funding or can it be existing state expenditures - what is permissible as match?

Please revisit pages 12-13 of the FOA, Section III-2. Cost Sharing or Matching. The match rules for this grant application are no different than any other federal grant match rules: To meet the match requirement, States can use non-federal sources that are not being claimed as matching sources for another Federal award and these matching funds must be used for purposes identified within the application's narrative. If they are being used as match for another federal award, they can then not be used for this PDG B-5 award. Please speak with people in your state that deal with match requirements and carefully read the FOA as it relates to match.

29. Given that Activity 5 cannot start right away for many States, and will most likely start toward the end of the year, can the money be expended in the grant year but the activities carry on past December 31, 2019? Is there the option for a no-cost extension period?

This Initial grant is a one-year grant and all activities related to this grant must end at the end of that grant year unless a no-cost extension is requested and granted – which is addressed at the end of a grant period, based on certain conditions. Therefore, a no-cost extension cannot yet be determined, is not guaranteed, and should not be expected.

The expectation is for all funds to be obligated by the last date of the grant period, which may be before December 31, 2019, depending on the actual date of award. States will have 90 days to liquidate those funds (pay out all expenses) for work carried out by the last date of the grant.

30. The FOA clearly states that the state's PDG B-5 application should be organized into five activities, yet the budget template (SF424-A) only allows room for four activities. Is there additional guidance on how states should complete the SF424-A given this apparent discrepancy?

Do not use the SF 424A to collect information on the 5 activities. Since there is only one CFDA number associated with the FOA, the applicant should only fill out one block on page 1 of the SF424A. All numbers on this front page are totals based on the numbers provided for each object class category on page 1A. Rows 2-4 on both pages do not need to be filled-in. In the budget narrative justification break out and explain the amounts for the 5 main activities for which funds will be spent, along with any other required breakdown of funds for TA, evaluation, etc., as required in the FOA.