

Q & A for Prekindergarten for Three-Year Old Students in High-Need School Districts (3PK)

- 1) Our school district is not on the eligibility list. We believe that based on recent data our district meets the criteria for high-needs. Is there a process for appealing this?

The Request for Proposals (RFP) for the Prekindergarten for Three-Year Old Students in High Need School Districts (3PK) grant specifies that “A school district is eligible to apply for this grant if it has a Need Resource Index within the top 50 percent of all school districts, as most recently calculated by the State Education Department, or if it is a high-need school district based on the State Education Department’s most recent calculation of the Need Resource Category.” The list posted in Appendix G is based on the May 2016 calculation of Need Resource Index and includes all districts that meet the at least one of the two criteria specified in the RFP. There is no process for appeal.

- 2) The application states “A school district is eligible to apply for this grant if it has a Need Resource Index within the top 50 percent of all school districts, as most recently calculated by the State Education Department, or if it is a high-need school district based on the State Education Department’s most recent calculation of the Need Resource Category.” If an eligible school district declines to apply, would a community-based organization (such as an Early Head Start/Head Start program) be eligible to apply.

Only school districts listed on Appendix G may apply for this grant opportunity.

- 3) Is this grant opportunity available to only public schools?

Yes. Only school districts listed on Appendix G may apply for this grant opportunity.

- 4) Please provide Appendix G which lists the school districts eligible to apply. I was not able to find Appendix G on the solicitation link.

Appendix G can be accessed at <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/funding/2016-17-prekindergarten-3pk/home.html>.

- 5) Page 4 of the RFP states, “Eligible districts may apply for as many full- or half-day placements for three-year up [sic] to students as it currently offers for four-year-old students.” Does this mean that districts without a current Pre-K program serving four-year-old students would be prohibited from applying for grant funds under this RFP?

Yes. Districts without a current Pre-K program for four-year-old students are not eligible to apply for the 3PK grant.

- 6) Is a district eligible even if their program for four-year olds is not State-funded?

Yes. An eligible district that operates a prekindergarten program for four-year olds may apply for this grant regardless of the source of funding that supports the program.

- 7) Will New York City Department of Education (DOE) be treated as one applicant? If not, what will be the applicant units (community school districts? Boroughs?) New York City is listed on one line in Appendix G re: eligibility.

New York City DOE will be treated as one school district for this grant and is the eligible applicant.

- 8) We are a CBO in District 20, Brooklyn. We want to apply for the Pre-K RFP for three year olds. Do we have to contact our district or can we just apply following the procedures outlined in the RFP?

This grant opportunity is only open to school districts. CBOs are not eligible to apply. In New York City the Department of Education is the eligible applicant, not individual community school districts. You may contact the New York City Early Childhood Division at earlychildhood@schools.nyc.gov to see if they plan on submitting an application.

- 9) It looks like the maximum amount New York City DOE could request is \$8.8 million (40% of the total funding). Is that correct?

Yes. For purposes of this grant, no school district shall receive more than forty percent (40%) of the total grant funds. The total grant appropriation to be awarded is \$22 million. No school district may receive more than \$8.8 million.

- 10) I tried entering New York City BEDS codes into the spreadsheet to calculate award amounts, but they were not recognized. Can you tell me which BEDS codes should be used for New York City DOE?

The BEDS code that should be used in the Appendix C - Grant Calculator is 300000.

- 11) Is the funding for this grant program for the 2016-2017 or 2017-2018 school year?

The initial project period is July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2017. Grantees will have the opportunity to renew funding on an annual basis for the following school year and thereafter subject to the achievement of performance targets and the annual appropriation of funds in the State budget for this purpose.

Prekindergarten programs operated under this grant generally must operate 180 days per year, five days per week; however, in the 2016-17 school year, grantees implementing programs must operate a minimum of 90 days. In 2016-17, grant

amounts for winning school districts will be adjusted based on the number of students enrolled, the type of placement created (full-day, half-day or conversion from half-day to full-day) and the number of days that students are served. The grant payable will be reduced by 1/180th for each day less than 180 that the program is in operation.

- 12) Our grant may not cover the entire cost of the program for us to add three-year olds and we did not allocate funds in the 2016-17 general fund budget to support the program. If we apply and are accepted, could we defer start-up until 2017-18 so we can allocate resources in the 2017-18 budget to offset expenses the grant would not cover?

No. Awardees must be prepared to operate a program for a minimum of 90 days during the 2016-17 school year.

- 13) Can two eligible school districts submit a joint application to partner with the same CBO (Head Start) that serves students from both school districts?

The RFP does not provide for consortium applications so it is not possible for two districts to apply jointly.

- 14) My district is small and we would like to partner with our local BOCES, which has significant expertise in early childhood education and is already working with other local districts. Can we apply in collaboration with BOCES?

While BOCES is not an eligible applicant for this grant, a district may use BOCES as a collaborating community-based organization (CBO).

- 15) Page 5 Program Requirements, 3. . . . "School districts are encouraged to collaborate to the maximum extent possible with CBO's to ensure consistent and efficient community coordinator." Please define "community coordination." Do you mean coordination of other services for high need students or academic services?

Community coordination means that the school district and CBOs that provide early childhood education programs in the community are working together to ensure that resources of all are maximized and that there is a consistency of opportunity for three-year olds attending different programs.

While coordination of both supportive services and academic services should be occurring, this section is specific to the statutory requirement that school districts set aside a minimum of 10 percent of the grant funds for the purpose of collaborating with a CBO for the provision of the Pre-K instructional program to some of enrolled students. Under this provision the CBO would be providing the teacher and paraprofessional and implementing the instructional program for those children enrolled in the district's 3PK program who are placed in that classroom.

16) Can a school district write the grant and assign all of the Pre-K placements to a CBO?

Yes, a district may apply for the grant with the intent of subcontracting with one or more collaborating CBOs for the provision of the instructional program to all enrolled students. The school district must monitor compliance by collaborating eligible agencies with all fiscal and program requirements, must assess student progress in the Pre-K program, and must correct any identified deficiencies.

17) Can we coordinate with our library to provide oral reading experiences and complimentary activities?

Costs associated with this activity would be allowable expenditures for the 3PK grant but would not be included as part of the 10 percent collaboration requirement.

18) Can we coordinate with another qualified provider to push-in for specific programming?

Costs associated with this activity would be allowable expenditures for the 3PK grant but would not be included as part of the 10 percent collaboration requirement.

19) Can the partnering CBO provide quality family engagement and supports?

Costs associated with this activity would be allowable expenditures for the 3PK grant but would not be included as part of the 10 percent collaboration requirement.

20) Can a school district work with a CBO if the CBO's role is to push in with an instruction module but the provider does not meet Pre-K teacher qualifications as long as the district's 3PK qualified teacher remains in the classroom?

The school district can have individuals who do not meet the Pre-K teacher qualifications provide supplemental instruction or special activities in the classroom as long as the 3PK qualified teacher remains with the class. While the costs associated with these activities would be allowable expenditures for the 3PK grant, they would not be included as part of the 10 percent collaboration requirement.

21) If a CBO asks to partner with a district, can the district refuse and seek a collaboration variance based on the district's evaluation of the quality of the CBO's current program for three-year?

Section 3602-e allows for a variance from the collaboration requirement based on documented evidence that the district has been unable to develop a collaborative arrangement for reasons that are outside the control of the district. Applicants must describe the district's extensive efforts to identify and recruit eligible agencies and the reasons for not collaborating. Allowable reasons include: there are no eligible

agencies; existing agencies are not interested or able to collaborate with the district; or there is good cause for not entering into a contract.

- 22) Are capital improvements, such as bathroom renovations or additions, allowable expenses?

Minor renovations, such as installation of child-sized toilets and sinks, are an allowable cost. Grant funds cannot be used for construction projects, such as adding classrooms or adding a bathroom to an existing classroom.

- 23) Are start-up costs eligible for funding? If so, would these cost need to be covered under the maximum grant request allowed as determined through use of the grant calculator?

Necessary costs associated with start-up of a program for three-year olds are allowable expenditures. As the statute did not provide for supplemental funding of start-up costs for this grant, such costs would need to be budgeted within the maximum grant request allowed as determined by the grant calculator (Appendix C).

- 24) Are building renovations eligible start-up costs?

Minor renovations, such as installation of child-sized toilets and sinks, are an allowable cost. Grant funds cannot be used for construction projects, such as adding classrooms or adding a bathroom to an existing classroom.

- 25) If some slots are contingent upon the award of start-up costs written into the proposal, and those start-up costs are not funded, may the district reduce the number of slots accordingly?

The statute did not provide for supplemental funding of start-up costs for this grant.

- 26) If a district is working with multiple CBOs, can start dates (and budgets) be calculated independently for each CBO's program?

A district that is working with multiple CBOs may calculate its maximum grant request for Year 1 (2016-17) using different start dates for its CBO partners. When this is the case, a district should include a grant calculator (Appendix C) for each start date. The district must ensure that each CBO's program operates for a minimum of 90 days in 2016-17. The district's proposal must include one proposed budget (FS-10) for the total amount being requested.

- 27) When a CBO has "ready to go" classroom space, as well as space that requires renovation, can the budget for that CBO's program be based on two different start dates?

When a district is working with a CBO partner that can has the capacity to start the program for some students while preparing space for the remainder of the children, the district may calculate its maximum grant request for Year 1 (2016-17) using different start dates for different classrooms within the same CBO. When this is the case, a district should include a grant calculator (Appendix C) for each start date. The district must ensure that each classroom operates for a minimum of 90 days in 2016-17. The district's proposal must include one proposed budget (FS-10) for the total amount being requested.

28) The District is working with a CBO that will have space available during the next school year (2017-18) that can accommodate 30 placements. Can these slots be included as part of this application?

No. Awardees and their collaborating partners must be prepared to operate a program for a minimum of 90 days during the 2016-17 school year.

29) If a CBO operates a program not funded by the district that currently serves three year olds, and that program currently does not meet the intended quality standards of 3PK, can the district include those slots in its proposal? Would these slots be considered conversion or new slots?

The district may include those slots in its proposal provided all three of the below listed criteria are met.

- *The district has selected the CBO as a collaborating partner through a competitive process; AND*
- *the CBO is willing to revise its practices as needed to adopt the required program quality standards within two years; AND*
- *the 3PK grant funds are used to supplement, not supplant existing State, federal or local funds supporting the program.*

When an existing State-funded Pre-K slot is changed from a half-day placement to full-day it is calculated as a conversion slot. Since these slots are not currently supported with State Pre-K grant funds, they would be considered new (Pre-K) slots.

30) If a school district has an existing collaboration with a CBO that will satisfy the 10% collaboration requirement do they need to do an open solicitation of all eligible providers?

If previously a district has completed a competitive process to select CBO collaborators and the existing collaborators have the capacity to meet the needs of the district, it is not necessary to conduct another competitive process.

31) Will the award amount remain flat from one year to the next?

Once awards are made, the maximum annual grant amount will not change for the duration of the project, subject to the appropriation and availability of funds in the State budget for this purpose.

32) Are school districts able to require three-year old students to be toilet trained in order to participate?

No. For the 3PK grant program, an eligible child is defined as a child who resides in the school district and who is three years of age on or before December 1st or who will otherwise be first eligible to attend a four-year old prekindergarten program the following school year. Neither the school district nor its CBO partners have the authority to apply additional criteria, such as being toilet trained, as a condition of enrollment or attendance.

A field memo on this topic is available on the Office of Early Learning website at <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/earlylearning/documents/GuidanceforToiletLearning.pdf>.

33) Do the current UPK regulations regarding class size and staffing apply to three-year old classrooms as well? (Maximum 18 students with one teacher/one aide or 20 with two aides)

Classrooms for three-year-olds are subject to the same class size and staffing requirements as classrooms for four-year-olds. Section 151-1.3(d) provides that the maximum class size for a prekindergarten class is 20 children. For classes of up to 18 students, there must be one teacher and one paraprofessional assigned to each class. For classes of 19 or 20 students, there must be one teacher and two paraprofessionals assigned to each class. When a CBO is subject to regulatory requirements of another State agency, such as child care licensing, the more stringent regulation takes precedence.

34) Is it allowable to limit class size to less than 18 students due to the age of the children?

Yes, districts may limit class sizes to less than 18 students based on the needs of the children who will be served.

35) Is it permissible to increase staffing to more than one teacher and one assistant due to the age of the children?

Yes, a district may increase staffing as it deems appropriate based on the needs of the children who will be served.

36) Should we include or reference information obtained from prior NYSED audits of our Pre-K for four-year olds program in the program narrative?

The district may include or reference such information to the extent that it supports the need for the program or demonstrates the capacity of the applicant to provide a high quality early childhood program for three-year olds.

37) We are seeking clarification on the supplement, not supplant rule. Can 3PK funding be used by the school district to contract with an existing Head Start program that is currently serving three year olds? For example, Head Start is currently serving 14 three-year old students from the district's attendance area, with no monetary support from the district. Can 3PK funding be used to support these existing 14 students (who would be dually enrolled as Head Start and district 3PK) or can grant funds only support an expansion beyond the current 14 students?

The district could contract with the Head Start program to provide Pre-K instruction to these 14 Head Start students. The 3PK funding must be used to supplement, not supplant (replace) the federal Head Start funds that currently support the program for these 14 students. The 3PK funding could support program enhancements and modifications that are needed to ensure that the program provided by the Head Start complies with the program requirements (such as hiring certified teachers or increasing the program from four to five days per week) and the approved quality standards (see pages 22-25 of the RFP).

38) Do the same students have to attend a 3PK program all five days per week, 180 days per year? Or can a program offer a combination of three-day (MWF) slots for one group of students and two-day (T/TH) slots for a different group of students (while still operating five days per week, 180 days per year)?

A district must provide 3PK instruction to the same group of students five days per week for a minimum of 180 days per year.

39) If CBOs currently serve both three- and four-year olds in the same classrooms, would they be required to establish separate classrooms in order to serve the three-year olds funded by 3PK?

A district and its collaborating CBOs may provide 3PK programming in mixed aged classrooms. However, the applicant's proposal must demonstrate how the applicant has distinguished between the needs of the three and four year olds and has created appropriate classroom environments and activities for each age group. In addition, the agency must ensure the proportional allocation of costs against the various funding streams that support the classroom.

40) Is there a minimum number of new or expanded Pre-K placements that a district should be aiming for? In other words, if a district is considering adding, for example

six slots, would that program be less likely to receive funding than one that adds 25 slots?

There is no competitive advantage based on the number of students proposed to be served.

41) Will districts adding full-day placements receive priority over those adding half-day placements?

There is no competitive advantage based on the type of placements (new full-day, new half-day, or conversions) that are proposed to be created.

42) On page 5 of the RFP under "Program Requirements," number three states, "School districts shall set aside not less than ten percent of the total grant award of the instructional program through collaborative efforts with eligible agencies." Does this mean 10 percent of the entire amount we're requesting? Or does it mean 10 percent of instructional program costs? If it's the latter, what expenses fall under the category of instruction program costs and what types of expenses don't fall under this category?

School districts must set aside not less than ten percent of the total grant award for the provision of the instructional program to some of the 3PK students through collaborative efforts with eligible agencies.

43) In the information on page 20, there is mention of a budget narrative and, later, mention of the "Adequacy of Resources Narrative." Are these two items the same thing? If not, what information should be included in each?

The budget narrative and the adequacy of resources narrative are the same thing. This section should address the information specified under Part 3 – Budget Narrative (page 26 of the RFP).

44) On page 23 of the RFP, there's a link at the bottom of the page (footnote 6) where applicants can access the early learning guidelines that are supposed to be followed for the 3PK programs. The link does not work. Can you provide the correct link/URL?

The New York State Early Learning Guidelines can be accessed at <http://ccf.ny.gov/files/7813/8177/1285/ELG.pdf>.

45) We would like to hand-deliver our 3PK application. Can you provide the contact name and phone number we need to give to the guard at the entrance of the building? Also, what is the cutoff time for delivering applications on August 17, 2016?

Applications may not be hand-delivered. Please follow the transmittal method set forth in the RFP. Submit 1 original and 3 copies postmarked by August 17, 2016, to:

*New York State Education Department
Attn: Prekindergarten for Three-Year Old Students in High Need School Districts
Grants Management
89 Washington Avenue
Room 475 EBA
Albany, NY 12234*

Applications are also required to be submitted to the Department via email to PREKRFP@nysed.gov. The file format can be in PDF or in Word/Excel. The subject line of the email should read as follows: RFP GC 16-014, 3PK and the legal name of applicant school district.

- 46) Due to the high level of need in the areas we serve, can an organization propose longer school days or a longer school cycle (e.g., a ten hour day or 200 days of service)?

No. The purpose of this grant is to increase the availability of high quality prekindergarten placements for high need children and schools within New York State, not extend the school day or year of existing programs.

- 47) Page 3 of the RFP continues to define the purpose of the grant citing that children who participate in high quality early education programs are more likely to achieve grade level successes. Paragraph 2 on this page specifically cites existing research regarding exposure to multiple languages resulting in enhanced child language outcomes across each of the languages. Are you suggesting that a robust 3PK curriculum include some form of foreign language exposure or instruction?

Research recognizes the positive impacts on children's language development when they receive high quality instruction in multiple languages. To the extent possible, programs are encouraged to introduce a variety of language and cultural experiences to students in prekindergarten.

- 48) Will the State be adapting the NYS Prekindergarten Foundation for the Common Core to accommodate 3-year-old children?

No. The RFP specifies that the instructional program for three-year olds should be aligned with the New York State Early Learning Guidelines, which provide a developmental framework for children's learning from birth through age five.