

Q & A for Additional Grants for the Expanded Prekindergarten for Three- and Four-Year Old Students in High-Need School Districts (EPK2)

- 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?

No. The Request for Proposals (RFP) for Additional Grants for the Expanded Prekindergarten for Three- and Four-Year Old Students in High Need School Districts (EPK2) grant specifies that "A school district is eligible to apply for this grant if it has a Needs Resource Index of 0.75 or higher, as calculated on May 17, 2017 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 F includes all districts that meet at least one of the two criteria specified in the RFP.

- 2) The application states "A school district is eligible to apply for this grant if it has a Needs Resource Index of 0.75 or higher, 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?

No. Only school districts listed on Appendix F may apply for this grant opportunity.

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

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

- 4) My public school currently has two full-day pre-k classes not funded by the state. Are we eligible to apply for the grant?

If your school district is listed on Appendix F you are eligible to apply for this grant.

- 5) If Appendix F shows a 0 for our district in the Need Narrative Point column, then I need not apply, correct?

No, that is not correct. All districts listed on Appendix F are eligible to apply. The Need Narrative Points column of Appendix F indicates the number of points a proposal from that district will score for Question #1 of the Need Narrative section as described on page 20 of the RFP.

- 6) Page 4 of the RFP states, "To be eligible for funding to serve three-year old students, the district must allocate funding to create an equal or greater number of slots for four-year old students." Does this mean allocate funds *from this grant request*? If the district already has an equal or greater number of 4-year old slots, do

they need to create more? A district has a 4-year old program and wants to create a 3-year old program. They do not need MORE 4-year old slots.

If a district already has a Pre-K program for four-year old students it may apply for funding to serve three-year old students, provided the request for slots for three-year old children does not exceed the number of four-year old students it has the capacity to serve.

- 7) Our district currently has a full-day state-funded Pre-Kindergarten program for 4 year olds. Are we eligible to apply for funding for a three-year old program, without adding new 4-year old slots?

Yes. If a district already has a Pre-K program for four-year old students it may apply for funding to serve three-year old students provided the request for slots for three-year old children does not exceed the number of four-year old students it has the capacity to serve.

- 8) On page 4, the RFP states, "To be eligible for funding to serve three-year-old students, the district must allocate funding to create an equal or greater number of slot for four-year-old students." What type of funding is this expected to be? From a district's general operating budget? From previous NYSED pre-K funding streams?

Funding that supports an existing prekindergarten program for four-year old students offered by a school district can be from other Pre-K grant programs administered by the State Education Department or local resources.

- 9) Page 4 of the RFP states, "To be eligible for funding to serve three-year old students, the district must allocate funding to create an equal or greater number of slots 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 to serve three-year old students?

A district that currently does not have a Pre-K program for four-year old students can apply for a grant to serve three-year old children only if it also applies for funding to serve an equal or higher number of four-year old students.

- 10) Is a district eligible to apply for a program for three-year old children if their program for four-year old students is not State-funded?

Yes. An eligible district that operates a prekindergarten program for four-year old students may apply for a grant to serve three-year old children regardless of the source of funding that supports their current program, provided the request for slots for three-year old children does not exceed the number of four-year old students it has the capacity to serve.

- 11) If we are successful in our application and secure funding for a new program here in Weedsport are we forced to offer a full day program or will we have the ability to run 2 half day sections?

Grant funds may be used to establish new full-day prekindergarten placements, convert existing half-day placements to full-day, or create new half-day placements for three- and/or four-year old students.

- 12) 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 F re: eligibility.

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

- 13) It looks like the maximum amount a district could request is \$2.0 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 \$5 million. No school district may receive more than \$2.0 million.

- 14) Is there a limit on the number of students we can propose to serve?

The only limit on the number of students a district can proposed to serve is dependent on the district's per pupil rate and the type of placements the district proposes to create. No school district may receive more than \$2.0 million (or 40 percent of the total grant appropriation) as determined using the Grant Calculator (Appendix C).

- 15) Would district awards be capped? For example, our district currently does not have a UPK program but would possibly be interested in 4 sections of half-day classes, however, our concern is that we would be held to only one or two sections?

The only limit on the number of students a district can proposed to serve is dependent on the district's per pupil rate and the type of placements the district proposes to create. No school district may receive more than \$2.0 million (or 40 percent of the total grant appropriation) as determined using the Grant Calculator (Appendix C).

- 16) Is the funding for this grant program for the 2017-2018 or 2018-2019 school year?

The initial project period is July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2018. 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 2017-18 school year, grantees implementing programs must operate a minimum of 90 days. In 2017-18, 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.

- 17) I noticed in Appendix F that the per pupil expansion rate for our district is \$5073.87. Are these monies **in addition to** the per pupil rate that we currently receive for our half-day Pre-K Program? Please advise.

When a district is converting a state-funded half-day slot to full-day, the per pupil rate listed on Appendix F is that amount that the district is eligible to receive in addition to the State funding already received for that half-day slot.

- 18) On the Grant Calculator: Appendix C, does the "Total Number of Four-Year-Old Placements Offered in 2016-17" include the number of available seats funded by UPK, Priority PK, and Statewide Expanded PK, or does the total include the total student enrollment funded by UPK, Priority PK, and Statewide Expanded PK?

The "Total Number of Four-Year Old Placements Offered in 2016-17" includes the total capacity of the district's four-year old program. This includes all placements that were available in the 2016-17 school year, regardless of funding source.

- 19) Does the question on the grant calculator referring to total number of Three-Year-Old Placements offered in 2016-2017 refer to state-funded slots only?

*No. The phrase "total number of three-year-old prekindergarten placements offered in 2016-2017" means the number of prekindergarten placements for three-year old children **offered by the school district** during the 2016-2017 school year, regardless of funding source.*

- 20) A CBO outside of a district attendance area operated a 3-year-old Head Start program at a district site. The district did not provide support through funding for the program. The CBO was unable to sustain the program and closed in spring of 2017. The district sees a need for a 3-year-old program without income eligibility requirements and would like to operate its own 3-year-old prekindergarten program.

- a) Since no district funds supported the CBOs 3-year-old program, do the CBO three-year-old slots need to be reported on the grant calculator?

No. The CBO slots should not be reported on the grant calculator. The phrase "total number of three-year-old prekindergarten placements offered in 2016-2017"

*means the number of prekindergarten placements for three-year old children offered **by the school district** during the 2016-2017 school year.*

- b) Is the district eligible for full day funding for its 3-year-old students?

Yes. The district may apply to create new full- or half-day placements to serve three-year old children, provided the request for slots for three-year old children does not exceed the number of four-year old students it has the capacity to serve.

- 21) Must districts be serving all eligible 4 year old children before serving the 3-year-old population?

No. Districts do not need to be serving all eligible four-year old children before starting a program for three-year old children. However, to serve three-year old children, the applicant must have the capacity to serve an equal or greater number of four-year old students.

- 22) Please clarify: If the district is currently receiving funding for ½-day slots under the Universal Pre-K program and converts some number of placements to full-day placements, the RFP says that we can request 1x the grant per pupil amount for our district in Appendix F for each of those conversion placements; will we continue to receive the current amount that we receive for those ½ day placements under UPK to make up the cost of a full day placement?

Yes. When a district converts an existing UPK half-day placement to full-day the placement is funded by a combination of the existing UPK funds and the additional funding provided by the EPK2 grant.

- 23) In 2016-17, the total number of students the district was required to serve were 2,193 students for UPK and 72 full day students and 54 half-day students for Priority PK. However, with the new 2017-18 UPK allocations, the district must serve 1,195.5 FTE students for maximum funding. Would the district be eligible to apply for expansion funds for student placements in excess of the PK base required by UPK?

A district may apply for funding to create new full-day slots, to create new half-day slots and/or to convert existing half-day slots to full-day. The EPK2 grant must be used to supplement, not supplant other sources of funding currently supporting prekindergarten services provided by the district. An applicant may not use EPK2 grant funds to replace local funds that currently support prekindergarten services.

- 24) As stated on page 5 of the RFP, "Grant funding must be used to supplement, not supplant, any existing prekindergarten programs." Please provide further clarification/definition of "supplement" and "existing prekindergarten programs."

A district may apply for funding to create new full-day slots, to create new half-day slots and/or to convert existing half-day slots to full-day. The EPK2 grant must be

used to supplement, not supplant other sources of funding currently supporting prekindergarten services provided by the district. An applicant may not use EPK2 grant funds to replace state, federal or local funds that currently support prekindergarten services offered by the district.

- 25) Our grant may not cover the entire cost of the program and we did not allocate funds in the 2017-18 general fund budget to support the program. If we apply and are accepted, could we defer start-up until 2018-19 so we can allocate resources in the 2018-19 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 2017-18 school year.

- 26) What happens if a district is unable to reach its targeted number of students in the first year? Will their award be reduced by the number of slots they were unable to fill, in the following year?

If a district is unable to reach its targeted number of students in the 2017-2018 school year, its maximum grant payable will be reduced based on the number and type of placements that are filled. The district will have access to its full award amount for 2018-2019 and subsequent years, subject to the achievement of other performance targets and annual appropriation of funds for this purpose.

- 27) When can districts expect to be notified if they have been awarded the grant for the 2017-2018 school year?

Award announcements will be made as soon as the review process has been completed and the required approvals have been obtained.

- 28) If grant awards are announced in a timely manner, we will plan to begin our planned placements at the beginning of the 2017-18 school year and provide a full 180 days of service. We would then prepare our budget and Appendix C with the expectation of 180 days. If, however, we do not receive notice in time to do so and have to reduce the number of days offered, will we be given the chance to amend our budget for the days lost once the award is made?

Given the timing of this RFP, it may not be realistic to anticipate providing 180 days of program during the 2017-2018 school year. Applicants are encouraged to plan for a mid-year start-up that ensures that a minimum of 90 days of instruction will be provided.

- 29) Because of the tight time frame between when districts could potentially be notified that they are a grant recipient and the start of the school year it may be difficult for districts to implement a program for this upcoming September. Will the grant allow for districts to potentially start a UPK program in January or implement for the 18-19 school year?

Districts must implement programming in the 2017-18 school year, but given the timing of this RFP, it may not be realistic to anticipate providing 180 days of program during the 2017-2018 school year. Applicants are encouraged to plan for a mid-year start-up that ensures that a minimum of 90 days of instruction will be provided.

- 30) When will student counts be recorded for a 90-day program (mid-year opening)?

It is anticipated that student counts for the 2017-2018 school year will be collected based on a district's EPK2 enrollment on or about April 2, 2018.

- 31) If a 90-day program is not able to fully enroll, how will that impact funding the following school year?

The student counts for the 2017-2018 school year will have no impact on the maximum award available for the 2018-2019 school year.

- 32) 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.

- 33) On page 5 of the RFP, the Program Requirements section states that "School districts are intended to work in collaboration with high-quality community-based providers..." Later in the RFP, this collaboration seems to be more of a strict requirement that necessitates a waiver if the school district isn't working with a community-based provider. Is collaboration with a community-based provider required or is it encouraged?

Section 3602-e of Education Law requires school districts to set aside a minimum of 10 percent of their total grant award to collaborate with CBOs for the provision of the Pre-K instructional program to enrolled children. The Department will consider a variance from this collaboration requirement based on documented evidence that the district is unable to develop a collaborative arrangement for reasons that are outside the control of the district. Allowable reasons include: a lack of eligible CBOs located within the district's boundaries; the existing agencies are not interested or able to collaborate with the district; or there is good cause for not entering into a contract (e.g., health and safety concerns). A variance request should describe the district's efforts to identify and recruit eligible CBOs and the reasons for not collaborating. Applicants seeking a variance from the collaboration requirement must complete and submit Appendix E, Collaboration Variance Request.

- 34) What constitutes an "eligible CBO" for Pre-K collaboration?

Eligible CBOs include existing providers of child care and education, licensed or registered day care providers, Head Start programs, nursery schools, special education 4410 providers, BOCES, non-public schools, libraries and museums. Such providers must currently meet, or be willing to adapt their programs to meet, the standards and requirements of Subpart 151-1 of the regulations of the Commissioner of Education, as well as the requirements of this grant.

- 35) If a district has no eligible providers within the district attendance area, is the district required to collaborate with a CBO outside the district attendance area?

No. A district is not required to look outside of the school district boundaries to identify potential CBO collaborators.

- 36) Can the CBO be a for profit provider, as long as the CBO is offering high-quality prekindergarten programming?

Yes. For-profit providers of child care and education are eligible CBOs as long as their programs currently meet, or they are ready to adapt their programs to meet the standards and requirements of Subpart 151-1 of the regulations of the Commissioner of Education, as well as the requirements of this grant.

- 37) If a district is applying for an expansion of its PreK program, does the 10% for CBOs requirement apply to the overall district UPK program, or to this particular grant? For example, if a district is currently offering 10 UPK classes, of which two are operated by a CBO (and receiving 20% of the overall UPK funding), and the district wants to offer two more classrooms of district-operated UPK, would they still be required to spend 10% of this grant on a CBO, if the overall program (12 classrooms) still ensures that at least 10% of funds goes to the CBOs?

The requirement that a district use a minimum of 10 percent of its total award for collaboration with a CBO for Pre-K instruction to enrolled children is specific for each Pre-K grant that a district receives. Districts receiving EPK2 awards will be expected to meet the collaboration requirement unless the criteria for a requesting a variance are met. See response to Question #33.

- 38) If we begin a new program and have it run by a CBO, can we later change over to running it with our own staff?

It is possible to change the configuration of the program over the life of this grant. The district might choose to run most of the program with its own staff. However, to the extent that there is an eligible CBO that is interested and able to collaborate with the district at least 10 percent of the EPK2 grant funds must be used to collaborate with a CBO for the provision of the Pre-K instructional program to some of the enrolled students.

- 39) 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 to provide Pre-K instruction to three- and/or four-year old students as a collaborating community-based organization (CBO).

- 40) 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 CBOs with all fiscal and program requirements, must assess student progress in the Pre-K program, and must correct any identified deficiencies.

- 41) If a program is situated in one of our school buildings, can the students take part in school lunch?

*Yes. If the district participates in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and/or School Breakfast Program (SBP), all students that are present during scheduled breakfast or lunch periods **must** have access to the SBP or NSLP meals.*

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

Yes. Costs associated with this activity would be allowable expenditures for the EPK2 grant but would not be included as part of the 10 percent collaboration requirement.

- 43) Can we coordinate with another qualified provider to push-in supplemental programming?

Yes. Costs associated with this activity would be allowable expenditures for the EPK2 grant but would not be included as part of the 10 percent collaboration requirement.

- 44) Can we contract with a CBO to provide quality family engagement and supports?

Yes. Costs associated with this activity would be allowable expenditures for the EPK2 grant but would not be included as part of the 10 percent collaboration requirement.

- 45) 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 EPK2 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 EPK2 qualified teacher remains with the class. While the costs associated with these activities would be allowable expenditures for the EPK2 grant, they would not be included as part of the 10 percent collaboration requirement.

- 46) 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 of Education Law 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 located within the district's geographic boundaries; existing agencies are not interested or able to collaborate with the district; or there is good cause for not entering into a contract.

- 47) 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.

- 48) 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- and/or four-year old students 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).

- 49) 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 amount that a district can be awarded is directly related to the number of students that it proposes to serve. If the number of slots is reduced, the grant will be reduced proportionally. The statute did not provide for supplemental funding of start-up costs for this grant. See response to Question #48.

- 50) The District is working with a CBO that will have space available during the next school year (2018-19) 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 2017-18 school year.

- 51) 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 approved quality standards of EPK2, 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 EPK 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. Slots that are not currently supported with State Pre-K grant funds would be considered new (Pre-K) slots.

- 52) 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 a district previously 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.

- 53) Is a canvas letter required if a district already has established partnerships with Community Based Organizations?

If a district previously 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.

- 54) Can partnering non-profits receive funds from the grant, and if so, does a bidding process need to be conducted to select those entities before applying in partnership with them?

School district must use a minimum of 10 percent of the EPK2 grant funds to collaborate with eligible CBOs for the provision of the prekindergarten instruction program. Section 3602-e of Education Law requires that such collaborators be selected through a competitive process. Requirements for the competitive process are set forth in 8 NYCRR, Section 151-1.6. If a district previously 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.

- 55) How will CBOs who would like to partner/collaborate with the school district share this intention/interest with the school district to meet the minimum 10% contracting goal with CBO collaborators?

CBOs that are interested in collaborating with a school district to provide prekindergarten instruction should contact the school district directly by telephone, email or letter.

- 56) 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.

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

No. For the EPK2 grant program, an eligible child for a Pre-K program for three-year old children 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](#).

- 58) 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.

- 59) What is the recommended student/staff ratio for 3-year olds? What is the maximum student/staff ratio for 3-year olds?

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.

There are no recommended or maximum student/staff ratio for programs serving three-year old children.

- 60) 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.

- 61) 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.

- 62) What are the square footage requirements per student for 3-year olds? What are the square footage requirements for 4-year olds?

Each prekindergarten classroom must have a minimum of 30 square feet per child of usable activity space, excluding cloakrooms, bathrooms and storage facilities. The requirement is the same for three- and four-year old students.

- 63) According to the RFP, Pre-K teachers are required to be certified in Birth to Grade 2 or have a bachelor's degree and five-year plan for becoming certified. Does the N-6 certification still meet the requirements of certification for the purpose of this grant?

Yes. Pre-K teachers must possess Early Childhood (Birth-Grade 2) certification or a prior certification that includes the early grades.

- 64) Should we include or reference information obtained from prior NYSED audits of our current Pre-K 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- and/or four-year old students.

- 65) Can the state funds be layered/blended with federal funds to support the dual enrollment of children in Head Start and state pre-K programs? For example, if Head Start is currently serving three-year old students from a district's attendance area, with no monetary support from the district, can EPK2 funding be used to support these existing students (who would be dually enrolled as Head Start and district EPK2) or can grant funds only support an expansion beyond the current Head Start enrollment?

The district could contract with the Head Start program to provide Pre-K instruction to the currently enrolled Head Start students, provided the following conditions are met. The EPK2 funding must be used to supplement, not supplant (replace) the federal Head Start funds that currently support the program for these students. The EPK2 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 and meets the approved quality indicators described on pages 21-24 of the RFP. Examples of program modifications and enhancements include, but are not limited to: extending the program from half-day to full-day; increasing the program from four to five days per week; hiring certified teachers; hiring substitutes so teachers can attend district professional development; aligning curriculum and assessments with the school district; and other activities related to meeting the approved quality indicators.

Grant funds may not be used for children currently enrolled in Head Start to receive the same program that they would be receiving without addition of EPK2 grant funds.

- 66) 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 children funded by EPK2?

No. A district and its collaborating CBOs may provide EPK2 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.

- 67) Can a district use this grant to expand their 4-year old program by one full day classroom and also institute a 3-year-old program? Can both age groups be served?

Yes. Districts may apply to create new full-day and/or new half-day placement or to convert existing placements from half- to full-day for either three- year old children, four-year old children or both, provided the request for slots for three-year old children does not exceed the number of four-year old students it has the capacity to serve.

- 68) 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.

- 69) 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.

- 70) 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 instructional 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 EPK2 students through collaborative efforts with eligible agencies.

- 71) We would like to hand-deliver our EPK2 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 9, 2017?

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 9, 2017, to:

*New York State Education Department
Attn: Additional Grants for Expanded Pre-K for Three- and Four-Year Old Students
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: Expanded Pre-K RFP GC 17-017 and the legal name of applicant school district.

- 72) 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)?

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. Applicants must propose to create new half-day or full-day placements or to convert existing half-day slots to full-day. A half-day is defined as a minimum of 2.5 hours of instruction; a full-day is a minimum of 5 hours of instruction. The program must operate a minimum of 180 days per school year (July 1st – June 30th). Applicants may propose a school day or school year that exceeds these minimums. However, this grant may not be used to lengthen the instructional time for existing full-day placements or to extend the duration of the school year of existing programs.

- 73) We presently serve less than half of our school district's four-year olds in a State funded Pre-K program. We want to expand those 1/2 day programs to full day programs because of our students needs as they move through the first years of school. And we want to add 3 New 1/2 day programs to expand our outreach to more students. The RFP says that "**Preference will be given to districts that do not presently have a State funded PreK program**". Would our situation of adding new 1/2 day programs be considered as preference because they have not been funded in the past?

No. A strong preference for funding will be given to districts that currently do not offer a state funded prekindergarten program. In making awards, proposals from applicants scoring 70 or higher that do not currently offer a state funded prekindergarten program will be funded first, starting with the highest scoring proposal in rank order. If funds are not exhausted after a score of 70 for the districts without a current state funded prekindergarten program is reached, awards will be made starting with the highest scoring proposal in rank order for all other districts.

- 74) Can you please explain the specific process or approach that will be used to prioritize districts listed as "Preference" districts on the eligibility list?

A strong preference for funding will be given to districts that currently do not offer a state funded prekindergarten program. In making awards, proposals from applicants scoring 70 or higher that do not currently offer a state funded prekindergarten program will be funded first, starting with the highest scoring proposal in rank order. If funds are not exhausted after a score of 70 for the districts

without a current state funded prekindergarten program is reached, awards will be made starting with the highest scoring proposal in rank order for all other districts.

- 75) On page 16, the RFP references the necessity to have proof of workers' compensation coverage and proof of disability benefits coverage. Should districts provide this proof when submitting the grant applications or is it sufficient for districts that are awarded funding to provide the proof once awards are announced?

Awardees may provide required documentation regarding workers' compensation coverage and proof of disability benefits coverage once awards are finalized.

- 76) How do I confirm what Needs Resource Index is?

The Needs Resource Index reflects a district's needs and resources relative to state averages. Needs are represented by a district's Extraordinary Needs Percent, as calculated for Foundation Aid, indexed to the state average. Resources are represented by a district's Combined Wealth Ratio, as calculated for a number of school aid formulas, including transportation aid. Dividing the Extraordinary Needs Index by the Combined Wealth Ratio yields the Needs Resource Index. A high score indicates a district with high needs and/or low wealth, compared to state averages.

- 77) Award amounts will be calculated as follows:

- New Full-day Placements: The applicant's approved number of new full-day placements multiplied by twice the selected grant per pupil amount; and
- New Half-Day or Full-Day Conversions Placements: The applicant's approved number of new half-day or conversion placements multiplied by the selected grant per pupil amount.

In regard to the "approved number" – there is no approved number in Appendix F for each district. To what does "approved number" refer? Does this mean the number we propose, if approved?

The "approved number" is the number of placements that are awarded to successful applicants. Generally, this will be the number of placements requested in the awardees proposal.

- 78) If we are proposing to convert ½ day placements under UPK to full day and the student begins at the start of the school year in the ½ day placement but the day is not extended until later in the year when the grant may be awarded, do we get "credit" for the full 180 days that the student has attended?

When a UPK placement is converted from half-day to full-day later in the year (rather than at the start of the school year) EPK2 funding for the conversion of that slot will be for the number of days that the student is in a full-day placement. In the

example provided by the question, the district would receive UPK funding for 180 days of programming and EPK2 funding as determined by the Grant Calculator (Appendix C) for the number of days that full-day services are offered.

- 79) If we begin a new program as a full day program and later decide that a half-day program will work better for our community, can we pull back to a half-day program with the associated reduction in funding? Our assumption is that we could not do the reverse, i.e. expand from a half-day program to a full day after the initial award; please confirm.

Applicants should submit proposals based on what they see as the long-term needs of their community. Once a program is implemented, any changes to the program model that is presented in a proposal selected for funding would need to be presented to the SED Program Manager for consideration based on the specific situation.

- 80) What specifically if anything do school district applicants need to do on Grants Gateway related to this application?

Grants Gateway is not applicable to this funding opportunity as school districts are exempt entities.

- 81) Does the grant have a match?

There is no match requirement for the EPK2 grant.

- 82) What specifically should the mandatory Notice of Intent say or include? Is there a specific format that must be used?

The Notice of Intent should simply state that the district intends to submit a proposal for the EPK2 grant program. It may be submitted as an email message to PREKRFP@nysed.gov.

- 83) Does the Quality Self-Assessment and Improvement Plan need to be completed prior to application?

No. Upon receiving an award, successful applicants must complete and submit the Prekindergarten Self-Assessment and Quality Improvement Action Plan (Appendix D).

- 84) Besides # new of full and half-day placements would there be additional criteria set forth to determine how these placements will be distributed within each eligible school district? IE NYC school district is large.

SED will not be establishing criteria for the distribution of placements within a school district. It is the responsibility of each applicant to specify how its proposal focuses services on the highest need schools and students.

- 85) The RFP doesn't include necessary wraparound services for young children in high need, low-income areas. Will this be a consideration in the program model?

The purpose of this RFP is to increase the availability of high quality prekindergarten placements for high need children and schools within New York State. These funds cannot be used to create wrap-around services.