

NOTICES

HIGHER EDUCATION, EARLY CHILD CARE AND COMMUNITY-BASED PARTNERSHIPS WORKING TO IMPLEMENT INNOVATIVE AND SUSTAINED PATHWAYS DESIGNED SPECIFICALLY TO MEET THE NEEDS OF PENNSYLVANIA'S CURRENT EARLY CHILDHOOD WORKFORCE

BUILDING CAPACITY FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS TO HELP ALL YOUNG CHILDREN LEARN AND DEVELOP

The Innovative Programs for Pennsylvania's Early Childhood Education Workforce application guidelines are established to ensure that ECE professionals have the required knowledge and skills to help all young children learn and develop. As a result these, guidelines provide direction to partnerships as they submit applications focusing on building new innovative and sustained career-oriented *pathways* for current early childhood workers to earn the following early childhood education (ECE) industry-recognized credentials:

- A credit-bearing Child Development Associate (CDA) certificate;
- An associate's degree;
- A bachelor's degree; and/or
- A Pennsylvania ECE PreK-4 instructional certificate.

Pathways created under these guidelines are designed to develop the capacity for early childhood educators to help all young children learn across the age groups of birth to eight years old. Applications submitted in response to these guidelines are limited to partnerships aimed at nurturing and sustaining high quality cross-systems relationships among and between two-year and four-year institutions of higher education (IHEs) and Pennsylvania's early learning programs that:

1. Institutionalize changes in associate degree, bachelor degree and early childhood teacher preparation certification programs that are more closely aligned with the knowledge, skills, and pedagogy required for early childhood workforce effectiveness that emerges as improved teaching and learning for Pennsylvania's young children; partnerships are expected to continue implementing innovations developed under these guidelines beyond the term of the grant award.
2. Culminate in high quality supervisory experiences for Pennsylvania's early childhood workforce, desiring to become certified early childhood teachers;
3. Identify "value added" contributions of partners that can be shared and scaled-up with other IHEs and early childhood centers;
4. Identify effective coaching strategies for higher education faculty, collaborating teachers, and center directors designed to improve the requisite knowledge, skills, and pedagogy required for succeeding in today's early childhood centers;
5. Build early learning programs and IHE capacity as they participate in specially-designed courses related to: Pennsylvania's Standards Aligned System (SAS); Pennsylvania's Learning Standards for Early Childhood Infant and Toddlers and Pre-Kindergarten; early childhood subject matter; developing knowledge and skills for educating young children whose primary language is not english, who are not part of the dominate culture, and children who have special needs; persistent challenging behaviors; effective coaching strategies; data driven decision making; and
6. Incorporate evidence-based ECE professional practices.

Partnerships are expected to continue implementing innovations developed under these guidelines beyond the term of the grant award. A written report consisting of both quantitative and qualitative information will be requested after the first year of program implementation.

Approximately \$1.4 million is available on a competitive basis under this grant application for one funding cycle beginning in fall 2017 and ending December 31, 2017, unless the U.S. Department of Education grants a one - year, no - cost extension. In that event funds will be available through December 31, 2018. Each regional or statewide-partnership will be limited to \$400,000.

Eligibility Requirements

Funded partnerships may be regional or state-wide and must include at least one two-year IHE and one four-year IHE, one state-funded professional development organization, and one early childhood learning center that has currently employed ECE educators who do not hold ECE workforce-related credentials. A listing of the eligible early childhood education centers is available at the following URL: [Compass](#).

Eligible partnerships under these application guidelines are designed to meet Pennsylvania's early childhood workforce needs by equipping early childhood education professionals with the requisite knowledge, skills, and capacity to help all young children learn to higher standards. Federal Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge funds will support partnership activities submitted in response to these guidelines. To submit a proposal under these guidelines, a partnership shall include at a minimum:

1. At least one early childhood program where its currently employed ECE educators do not hold ECE workforce-related credentials. A listing of eligible early childhood education programs is available at URL: [Compass](#).
2. At least one two-year IHE that offers early childhood development programs¹ that culminate in an associate's degree. Each two-year IHE must be eligible to participate in Pennsylvania's T.E.A.C.H.² financial aid program at the time the application is submitted.
3. At least one four-year IHE that offers early childhood development-related program that culminate in a bachelor's degree and may or may not lead to a PreK-4 instructional certification.³ Each four-year IHE must be eligible to participate in Pennsylvania's T.E.A.C.H. financial aid program at the time application is submitted; and
4. At least one Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) funded professional development organization. See [T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood Pennsylvania](#) for a list of funded organizations.

Additional partners may include:

1. Other educational agencies, including but not limited to, a local school district or career technology center with an ECE program of study;
2. A Pennsylvania Intermediate Unit or non-profit cultural or educational organization;
3. Teacher organizations;
4. Early learning program associations or organizations; and/or
5. Business and community members.

¹ The name of a degree program is inconsequential under these competitive guidelines.

² Eligibility information for the T.E.A.C.H. financial aid is available at [T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood Pennsylvania](#)

³ A PDE-approved PreK-4 instructional certification preparation must also comply with PreK-4 Framework Guidelines and other requirements related to approval of this preparation program.

Competitive applications submitted under these guidelines will assist Pennsylvania IHE's and early learning programs to:

1. Develop sustainable relationships that culminate in high quality practice-based/clinical experiences for Pennsylvania's current and future early childhood workforce; and
2. Integrate Pennsylvania's Learning Standards for Early Childhood Infant and Toddlers and Pre-Kindergarten into their respective early childhood courses and degree programs (see [Early Learning Standards Infants and Toddlers](#) and [Early Learning Standards Prekindergarten](#)); and
3. Incorporate Pennsylvania's Core Knowledge Competencies for Early Childhood and School – Age Professionals; and
4. Integrate PA-AIMH Infant Mental Health Competencies for Level 1 [The Pennsylvania Association for Infant Mental Health](#); and
5. identify and implement effective coaching strategies for collaborating teachers, early learning program directors, and higher education faculty who “supervise” student teachers to improve retention and professional practice; and
6. Integrate change in early learning programs and in school settings that are more closely aligned with the knowledge, skills, and pedagogy required for early childhood educators to be effective in improving teaching and learning for Pennsylvania's young children.

Each partnership will designate an IHE as the lead organization that will be responsible for all aspects of the project.

Application Deadline

Applications are due by **5 p.m., September 29, 2017.**

The grant application guidelines and forms will be available on PDE's website June 30, 2017. Questions concerning the grant application should be addressed to Susan Polojac, Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge Director, Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) 333 Market Street Harrisburg, PA 17126 (717) 265-8911 or via email spoljac@pa.gov.

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Secretary of Education