

ISSUE DATE: October 29, 2015

Purchasing Department Department of Early Education and Care
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RFR Name/Title Preschool Expansion Planning Grant
RFR Number RFR **PEPG 001**
COMMBUYS Bid Number Blanket Bid BD-16-1037-1037C-1037L-00000005992

1. Description or Purpose of Procurement:

The Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) was awarded a federal Preschool Expansion Grant (PEG) from the U. S. Department of Education to expand high-quality early childhood education to four-year-old children whose families earn under 200 percent (200%) of the federal poverty line. Five high-need communities in Massachusetts -- Boston, Holyoke, Lawrence, Lowell, and Springfield -- are currently being funded through this federal grant to implement full-day, full-year preschool for four-year-olds through public-private partnerships between the local public school district as the lead education agency (LEA) and two or three local licensed early learning providers (ELPs). As currently designed, the public school districts have been granted the funds and subcontract with the ELPs for the direct services to children and families in the community. LEA and their ELP partners work jointly on the program design including the selection and implementation of curriculum, coaching, coordination and provision of comprehensive services, family engagement supports, inclusive services for special populations, and joint professional development.

Per federal requirement, the PEG is designed to serve four year old children exclusively. Through this procurement, EEC is seeking to support up to ten communities in an examination of the infrastructure, funding and supports that would be needed to increase access to high quality preschool programs, in a manner similar to the parameters of the PEG, to children ages 2.9 through kindergarten entry.

2. Applicable Procurement Law:

Check Appropriate Box ("X"):	Type of Purchase	Applicable Laws
	Executive Branch Goods and Services	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Goods and Services	MGL c. 7, § 22; c. 30, § 51, § 52; 801 CMR 21.00
<input type="checkbox"/>	Human and Social Services	MGL c. 7, § 22, § 22N; c. 30, § 51, § 52; 801 CMR 21.00; 808 CMR 1.00

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Legal Services | MGL c. 30, § 51, § 52 and § 65; c. 7, § 22; and 801 CMR 21.01(2) (b) |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Grants | MGL c. 7A, § 7; St. 1986 c. 206, § 17; 815 CMR 2.00 |

3. Acquisition Method:

Check All Applicable (“X”):

Category

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Fee-For-Service |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Outright Purchase |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Rental (not to exceed 6 months) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Term Lease |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Tax Exempt Lease-Purchase (TELP) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | License |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Other: |

4. Whether Single or Multiple Contractors are Required for Contract:

Check One (“X”):

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Single Contractor |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Multiple Contractors |

- a. Estimated Number of Awards** The target maximum number of grantees is 10; the Purchasing Department may award more or fewer grants, if it is in the best interests of the Commonwealth to do so. The maximum grant award available is up to \$50,000.00. If fewer than 10 grants are awarded, applicants may be invited to amend budget requests to adjust for allocation of resources to the number of eligible bidders.
- b. Adding Grantees after initial Award** If, over the life of the grant, the Purchasing Department determines that additional grantees may be added, these may be drawn from qualified candidates which responded to this Solicitation but were not awarded a grant. If necessary to meet the requirements of the Commonwealth, the Solicitation may be reopened to obtain additional Bids.

Entities Eligible to Use the Resulting Contract

Check One (“X”):

Eligible Entities

Limited User Contract – Restricted to Use by Defined Entities Only. Any Contract(s) resulting from this Bid will be open for use by the issuing Purchasing Department and the following other entities:

The Purchasing Department reserves the right to add or remove additional authorized users during the contract term.

Limited User Contract – Restricted to Use by Issuing Entity Only.

5. Expected Duration of Contract (Initial Duration and any Options to Renew):

Contract Duration	Number of Options	Number of Years/Months
		6 months
Initial Duration		On or about January 1, 2016 to June 30, 2016.
Renewal Options	0	There will be no (0) options to renew.
Total Maximum Contract Duration		The total maximum contract duration will be 6 months.

Funding for this grant is available through line item **3000-6025 Commonwealth Preschool Partnership Initiative** of EEC's FY16 budget. Therefore, all funds must be incurred and spent within the FY16 state fiscal year.

6. Contract Performance and Business Specifications:

A. Background

As noted above, EEC was awarded a federal Preschool Expansion Grant (PEG) from the U. S. Department of Education to work with five communities to implement high quality full-day, full-year preschool for four-year-olds through public-private partnerships between the local public school district as the LEA and two or three local licensed ELPs. A description of Massachusetts' PEG plan can be found in the state's [grant application](#).

Through this planning grant procurement, EEC is offering the opportunity for up to ten communities to enter into a strategic planning process to identify what would be required in order for the PEG model to be implemented locally to serve children ages 2.9 through Kindergarten entry. This strategic planning process is expected to identify current strengths within the community, resources that could be leveraged and address any barriers to achieving a PEG-like model.

The community's ability to meet the following elements of high quality preschool as defined in the PEG must be addressed in the planning process funded through this procurement:

- Partnership between the local school district and private early learning providers in all areas of planning and implementation of expanded preschool programming.
- Full-day, full-year programming (at least 8 hours/day, 12 months/year).
- Level 4 rating in the Massachusetts Quality Rating and Information System (QRIS) or National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) accreditation of participating ELPs within 4 years.
- A maximum class size of 20 and maximum child-teacher ratio of 10:1.
- A curriculum selected using the Massachusetts Common Core Standards and EEC Standards and Guidelines.
- Teaching Strategies Gold™ used as a formative assessment tool.
- At least one educator in each classroom will have a bachelor's degree in a relevant field.
- All educators (including assistants) paid salaries that are commensurate with those of comparable positions in the public schools.
- Professional development for all staff, including coaching, group trainings, and other supports for planning and implementation of curriculum, provided in collaboration with the local LEA.
- Family engagement activities, including support for the Kindergarten transition and information and resources about child development.
- Comprehensive services (including services addressing health, mental health, and behavioral needs) provided to all families.
- Inclusion of students receiving special education services (6.9% of students served) as well as children requiring other supports (e.g., children without permanent homes, dual language learners (DLLs), refugee or immigrant families, etc.).
- Effective efforts to build links with services for children from birth to age 3 (e.g., early intervention or home visiting services), as well as support for the transition to Kindergarten and connections with public elementary schools (e.g., through communication between Prekindergarten and Kindergarten teachers and sharing of Kindergarten expectations).

B. Eligibility

EEC intends to award grant funding for up to ten communities to implement a strategic planning process to identify resources needed to offer increased levels of high quality preschool programming, similar to that offered through the PEG, for low income children ages 2.9 to kindergarten entry who otherwise may not have access to a prekindergarten experience.

In order to be considered for a grant, applicants must meet the following criteria:

- Cities, towns, regional school districts or educational collaboratives currently providing pre-kindergarten or preschool opportunities are eligible to apply. The application, however, must represent a partnership between a public school district (LEA) and at least two EEC licensed early learning providers (ELPs). This partnership must be able to demonstrate a history of prior collaboration. ELPs may include not for profit or for profit early education providers, independent family child care educators and/or family child care systems. The partnering LEA must have staff dedicated to early learning programming. A community is defined as a geographic area where LEA and ELP partners serve children who will attend kindergarten within the LEA's school district. A documented demand for increased preschool services in the community, particularly for children facing multiple risk factors to success in educational outcomes such as poverty, high numbers of recent immigrants, high percentage of homeless families, high crime rates, etc.

Preference will be given to applicants that can also demonstrate:

- An existing community-wide vision for early childhood developed via an array of public and private entities (such as schools, providers, mayor's offices, funders, legislators, etc.) with an interest in the education of young children. For example, PEG recipients and EEC's 2014 and 2015 Birth to Grade 3 Alignment grantees will be given preference if they are determined by EEC to have been successful to date in their grant implementation. Current PEG recipients must use grant funding to plan for potential expansion of their PEG program to children ages 2.9 to 4. Other applicants may propose to analyze their community's ability to offer high quality preschool services (as defined above) to children ages 2.9 to kindergarten entry.
- That the applicant community serves high percentages of high-needs students.

C. Scope

Funds from this procurement will support local strategic planning processes in up to 10 communities that identify the current resources, opportunities and barriers to expanding the availability of high quality preschool services (as defined in section 6A above) to children aged 2.9 - kindergarten entry. Communities that are current PEG recipients may examine the expansion of services from age 2.9 to age 4.

The strategic plan must address the following:

1. Leadership: including partnership between public school and early education programs,
2. Program Design and Development : describing elements of the current infrastructure that would need to be enhanced in order to meet the required elements of high quality.
3. Costs: including anticipated investment required to develop high quality programming as well as current resources and those that could be leveraged through public and private sources to sustain the expanded high quality preschool services in the long term.

For more detail on the required elements of the strategic plans funded through this grant, please see Attachment A: Strategic Plan Design Requirements.

7. **Required Services**

The selected grantees will be expected to conduct a planning process and produce the following:

A. **Updates to EEC**

Grantees will be expected to update EEC on progress every two months during the planning process. The format and structure of these updates will be agreed upon by EEC and the selected grantees. They will be expected to review progress on all the areas of focus contained within this grant solicitation.

B. **Implementation Plan**

Selected grantees will develop a report that includes a written plan for implementation that addresses the required elements described above. At the end of the grant period, grantees will submit this report to EEC. The report should include:

- A plan for implementation addressing each of the questions and areas of focus described above;
- A plan for monitoring and quality improvement over the life of the proposed program;
- Information about future additions or adaptations that might be considered but are outside the scope of the current plan;
- A list of all organizations that would be involved in the proposed program, either in planning, oversight or implementation; and
- Endorsements from all named collaborators.

C. **Costs**

Selected grantees will provide a detailed overview of the expected costs of development of the strategic plan and a timeline with achievable goals for completing the plan. Budgeted cost should also allow for participation of key personnel in one EEC-organized statewide meeting of all grantees.

8. **Fund Use:**

EEC's requires that administrative costs do not to exceed 10% of the total budget, as outlined in the **Budget Section Information**. Funds associated with this RFR may be used for the following costs associated with the delivery of the required services:

- Salaries and fringe benefits;
- Contracted consultants;
- Supplies and materials to develop-the strategic plan;
- Printing and reproduction;

- Meeting expenses related to development of the strategic plan;
- Travel, mileage;
- Operating costs (i.e. support staff, telephone, computer and internet access, postage, copying, office supplies, etc.).

Administrative Costs (capped at 10%) include:

- Salary of Supervisor;
- Secretary/bookkeeper;
- Stipends for support staff providing administrative support;
- Fringe Benefits (e.g. health insurance, FICA) of administrative staff;
- Equipment rental;
- Indirect Costs.

9. Performance Measures:

<u>Project Outcomes</u>	<u>Measures</u>
Project is completed on time and on budget. Grantee provides the final report.	Goals met and total costs fall within agreed upon limits Deadlines and work product requirements established by EEC are met.
Grantee updates EEC at least twice during the 6 months of the grant.	Deadlines and work product requirements established by EEC are met.
Grantee provides a budget as required by this RFR.	Deadlines and work product requirements established by EEC are met.

10. Anticipated Expenditures, Funding or Compensation:

The duration of this contract will be from the execution date (expected date is January 1, 2016) to June 30, 2016, with a maximum obligation of up to \$50,000 to fund up to ten selected grantees. Funding is subject to state budget allotment and appropriation. Should additional funds become available or fewer than 10 bids approved, EEC reserves the right to make additional awards based on the responses received, the needs of the Commonwealth, and/or best value to the Commonwealth. EEC also reserves the right, in the event additional funding becomes available, to add additional required services and/or extend the existing services.

Applicants should submit a deliverables-based budget for the deliverables listed below, for the seven month grant period. All travel and other incidental costs must be included in this budget. Bidders should note that budgets are evaluated based on “best value” to the Commonwealth and are not based upon lowest price.

Deliverables include formal reports on the findings of the planning process. The following

schedule of deliverables is expected to be submitted to Anita Moeller at EEC by the dates listed below:

1. Written progress updates on grant funded activities by March 15 and May 15, 2016.
2. By June 15th, a final strategic plan that addresses all required areas: leadership, design, infrastructure, community needs and resources and anticipated cost of implementation.

As the selected grantee will be expected to adjust to changes in schedules, EEC will be responsible for updating the grantees on a frequent and regular basis regarding any schedule changes.

Funds distributed from this grant shall be deposited with the treasurer of the city, town, regional school district or educational collaborative and held in a separate account and shall be expended by the school committee of the city, town, regional school district or educational collaborative without further appropriation.

11. Criteria

Applicants must submit responses that meet all the submission requirements of the grant. Only responsive proposals that meet the submission requirements will be evaluated, scored and ranked by the evaluation team according to the evaluation criteria. Additional information may be requested for evaluation purposes.

A. Submission Requirements

The proposal must be written clearly and concisely so that it is understandable to a non-technical reader and organized in a manner convenient for reviewers. The cover sheet should include (a) the name and location of the responding entity, (b) the name, title, affiliation, address, telephone and email address of the individual having authorization to bind the applicant to the proposal, and (c) the name of the individual who will serve as the project manager.

Please note the following:

- In general, applications received after the deadline will not be reviewed or considered for funding. EEC reserves the right to review and/or fund an application submitted after the deadline where an emergency situation caused or contributed to the late submission.
- EEC reserves the right to request (1) additional information regarding any responses/applications received or (2) revisions to responses/applications. EEC shall have the right to specify the amount of time for submission of such additional information/revisions. EEC shall have the right to disqualify responses where such information and/or revisions are not submitted within the timeframe specified by EEC.

- EEC reserves the right to interview applicants as part of the application and evaluation process.

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following six components:

1. Executive Summary

The Applicant shall include a one page Executive Summary, double-spaced, 12 point font, describing:

- The Applicant's understanding of the overall project, goals and objectives, and components;
- The partners involved in the grant application;
- A brief summary of the proposal that includes how the Applicant plans to complete the project;

2. Project Narrative

The Applicant shall include a project narrative of no more than **five pages**, double spaced, 12 point font, which outlines the proposed analysis and planning process for the period of the grant. The project narrative must include:

- Who will be involved in the planning process and/or how participants will be selected? What knowledge and experience will be represented on this team?
- If a consultant is hired to facilitate the process, how what will the expectations be of the consultant and what criteria will be used to hire the consultant?
- What steps will be undertaken to address the questions and areas of focus defined in Attachment A of this RFR?
- Information already known about the needs of families, children, teachers and programs in the community, existing resources (financial and in-kind) as well as a discussion of how the planning process will consider these needs.
- A description and reasonable timetable of activities and deliverables.
- A budget and budget narrative.
- An estimate of the work (i.e., hours per task, rate/hour) required for each facet of strategic planning and reporting, as well as who is responsible for each facet of the work and his or her qualifications for all related activities (See Section 3 below, "Key Personnel"). When work is subcontracted, estimates of the work and personnel responsible should be provided for the subcontractor as well.

- Responses should include information about how soon Applicants will be able to begin the planning process and, due to the short nature of the grant, any steps that will be taken to expedite this process.

3. Key Personnel

The Applicant shall designate a manager for this project as well as a lead from each of the partnering agencies. These individuals shall be considered Key Personnel. The Applicant shall propose such other individuals as are necessary, such as contracted supports, to perform the work specified in this grant and shall submit evidence of the qualifications of the Project Manager, and any research team members, including resumes or *curriculum vitae* (CV), and references. The selected grantee will be required to obtain advance written approval from EEC to remove or replace Key Personnel and any other personnel that the selected grantee and EEC mutually agree to so designate.

Key Personnel (including contracted supports) must meet the following qualifications:

- Demonstrated expertise in designing and implementing strategic plans;
- Demonstrated ability to generate actionable findings and products from strategic plans in a format accessible to and understandable by a general audience;
- Experience with successfully conducting planning in district/school environments and/or early education and care environments; and
- Demonstrated ability to work with diverse communities of practitioners and families.

4. Deliverable-based Budget

The budget of up to \$50,000 should be based upon the Applicant's proposed work plan for the contract period (January 1, 2016 through June 30, 2016). Deliverables and the payment associated with each deliverable should be clearly described. Subcontractor budgets should be detailed in the same fashion. A budget narrative explaining the costs should be included with the deliverable-based budget. Information about indirect costs should be included in this narrative. Payments will be made to the selected grantee upon EEC's acceptance of deliverables.

B. Evaluation criteria

<u>Evaluation Criteria</u>	<u>Maximum Points</u>
The Applicant provided a one-page executive summary that demonstrates the Applicant's understanding of the overall project, goals and objectives, and components; identifies the partners involved in the grant application; and provides a brief summary of the proposal that includes how the Applicant	10

plans to complete the project.	
The Applicant has provided a project narrative of no more than five pages that addresses all questions listed on page 15.	35
<u>Key Personnel:</u> The Applicant has designated a Project Manager for this project. Key Personnel (including contracted supports) meet the following qualifications: No apparent or actual conflicts of interest exist with Key Personnel	35
<u>Deliverable-based Budget.</u> Following budgetary guidelines, the Applicant has provided an itemized budget of up to \$50,000 accompanied by a detailed budget narrative and timeline. Funds allow for participation of key personnel in one state-wide meeting of grantees.	20

12. Instructions for Submission of Responses:

Responses must be sent via the “Create Quote” functionality contained in COMMBUYS. For instructions concerning how to submit a Quote, please see Appendix B.

Any submission which fails to meet the grant submission requirements will be found non-responsive without further evaluation unless the evaluation team, at its discretion, determines that the non-compliance is insubstantial and can be corrected. In these cases, the evaluation team may allow the Applicant to make minor corrections to the submission.

13. Estimated Procurement Calendar

<u>Procurement Activity</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>
• Bid Release Date	10/29/2015	12:00 PM
• Deadline for Submission of Questions through COMMBUYS “Bid Q&A”	11/9/2015	4:00PM

- EEC responses to Q&A published (Estimated) 11/16/2015 4:00PM
- Deadline for Bid Responses (“Bid Opening Date/Time” in COMMBUYS) 12/14/2015 3:00PM
- Notification of Apparent Successful Bidder(s) (Estimated) 12/30/2015
- Estimated Contract Start Date 1/1/2016

Applicants are required to monitor COMMBUYS for changes to the procurement calendar for this grant solicitation.

a. Online Questions (Bid Q&A)

Written Questions must be entered by pressing the “Bid Q&A” tab in COMMBUYS no later than the “Online Questions Due” date and time indicated. EEC reserves the right not to respond to questions submitted after this date. It is the Applicant’s responsibility to verify submission of questions.

It is the responsibility of the Applicant and selected grantee to maintain an active registration in COMMBUYS and to keep current the email address of the Applicant’s contact person and to monitor that email inbox for communications from EEC, including requests for clarification. EEC and the Commonwealth assume no responsibility if an Applicant’s/ selected grantee’s designated email address is not current, or if technical problems, including those with the Applicant’s/selected grantee’s computer, network or internet service provider (ISP) cause email communications sent to/from the Applicant/selected grantee’s and EEC to be lost or rejected by any means including email or spam filtering.

Written Responses to Questions will be released on or about the “Responses to Questions Posted Online” date indicated in the Procurement Calendar (above).

(Written questions and responses will be posted on the Bid Q&A Tab for this grant in COMMBUYS.)

b. Grant Amendment Deadline

EEC reserves the right to make amendments to the grant after initial publication. It is each Applicant’s responsibility to check COMMBUYS for any amendments, addenda or modifications to this grant, and any Q&A records related to this grant. EEC and the Commonwealth accept no responsibility and will provide no accommodation to Applicants who submit a proposal based on an out-of-date grant solicitation or on information received from a source other than COMMBUYS.

c. Estimated Contract Start Date

January 1, 2016 is the estimated start date. The actual start date will be the Contract Effective Date which is the date the Contract is executed by the parties.

14. Required Forms

Responses to this grant must contain the following documents:

Check if applicable (“X”)	Form/Document	Notes/Instructions (If any)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Executive Summary	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Project Narrative	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Listing of Key Personnel	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	All Inclusive Deliverable-based Budget	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Commonwealth Terms & Conditions	Wet Ink Signature Required
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Request for Taxpayer Identification Number & Certification (Massachusetts Substitute W-9 Form)	Wet Ink Signature Required
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Contractor Authorized Signatory Listing	Wet Ink Signature Required
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Authorization for Electronic Funds Transfer	Wet Ink Signature Required
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Additional Environmentally Preferable Products/Practices	

The above documents are available as part of the Bid record on WWW.COMMBUYS.COM.

15. Grant Attachments

Appendix A: Required Specifications

Appendix B: COMMBUYS Electronic Quote Submission Instructions

Appendix C: Supplier Diversity Plan

Appendix D: Environmentally Preferable Products

Attachment A: Strategic Plan Design Requirements

Attachment A

Strategic Plan Design Requirements

The strategic plan developed through this grant must address the following areas of concern in its identification of the needs of the local early education community and its ability to expand high quality preschool services to children aged 2.9 through kindergarten entry (or in the case of current PEG recipients, age 2.9 to 4.)

1. Leadership

Plans for ongoing leadership will be described. In doing so, grantees must directly address, with specific examples, the planned role of the LEA and ELPs in the governance, provision of direct services, program monitoring and grant management that would be needed in order to expand high quality preschool in this community. Plans should address questions such as:

- What are the organizations that need to take leadership roles in the collaboration?
- How will these roles be defined?
- What skills and strengths does each organization bring to the collaboration and what steps will be taken to ensure that best practices are shared across organizations?
- What individuals in these organizations need to be engaged and in what roles?
- What skills are necessary to manage this collaboration process and how will the community ensure that individuals with these skills are in place?
- What mechanisms for communication need to be established or enhanced?
- Who else needs to be involved across the community, either directly supporting planned programming or indirectly ensuring that adjustments to existing processes can be made to accommodate the needs of new approaches and building community-wide interest and support for the programs?

Attention should be paid to those who will provide the direct services as well as community organizations representing birth to grade 3 service provision, volunteer services and those who will work with children before and after the planned preschool programming.

Continued program oversight and quality improvement should also be considered. For example:

- Who will be responsible for these activities over the life of these programs?
- How will these leadership roles be structured?
- What systems will be put in place to gather data that can support strategic decisions?
- What data will be used and how will you ensure that it is available?
- What role will program staff and other community members play in this process?
- What role will EEC be expected to play in supporting programs over time?

EEC acknowledges that the best laid plans are just that, plans. Grantees must address how the partners involved in this planning process would adapt to changes and unexpected situations that would inevitably occur in the implementation of this plan. For example:

- How would the governance of this group respond to unanticipated challenges encountered during implementation of this plan?
- How would members communicate challenges and make decisions when the plan needs to be changed in order to respond to the realities of the early education workplace?
- How would program staff, teachers and families be informed of changes and included in the decision making process?

2. Program Design and Development

a. Needs Assessment

The plan must include an assessment of the needs of families and children that expanded high quality preschool services would strive to serve. Needs that are currently addressed by programs and services in the community should be discussed, as well as unmet needs. Children's school success should be considered, and should incorporate a broad vision of success that includes essential elements such as emotional health and physical development. The varied needs of the families that can also affect healthy development, such as access to health care, safe and stable housing, food security, understanding of child development and stable employment, should also be considered. Specific questions to consider include:

- How would expanded high quality preschool programming address unmet needs while also building on the strengths of programs already in place in the community?
- What groups of children and families are at particular risk and how would programs be targeted to serve them?
- What impacts would grantee partners hope to have on children and families beyond the results of current programming?
- What would have to happen for children and families in order for expanded pre-k to be successful?

The needs of educators and programs in the community should also be considered as part of the plan by responding to the following questions:

- What are the indicators of the current level of quality of classrooms in this community?
- How successfully do programs engage with families and improve family outcomes?
- What are the qualifications and capacity of educators and program administrators?
- What resources are available for program and educator capacity improvement?
- What needs are not met by current existing resources?
- What would reflect success for teachers, for programs and for the community?

b. Teacher Capacity and Classroom Quality

The professional development needs of teachers and other school staff in the community should be described and a plan to provide the necessary supports need to expand high quality prek developed. This plan must address the supports that educators need to improve classroom quality, the differentiation of instruction and the efforts to engage with families, particularly those without a history of strong connections to the education system.

As programs are required to have at least one educator with a Bachelor's degree in every classroom and a maximum child to teacher ratio of 10:1, Proposals should address any challenges that grantees might expect to be associated with hiring this staff, both in terms of availability of qualified teachers and potential impacts this requirement may have on the staffing of programs community-wide. As discussed, plans will include significant investments in teacher professional development and should also address efforts to retain trained teachers in early childhood classrooms so that programs and children benefit fully from these investments.

Plans must also address the current status and future plans of the partners in terms of QRIS levels and NAEYC accreditation. In doing so, needs related to classroom quality should address the needs for high quality physical facilities.

Three out of the five current PEG grantees have chosen to create shared space for preschool programming within their communities. One is using space in public elementary schools and two have developed new space to house multiple early education providers and public school staff. Recipients of this planning grant should consider:

- For current PEG programs: what would be the implications on physical facilities of expanding to serve younger children?
- For non-PEG grantees: what would be the community plan for offering new preschool services in terms of location and accessibility for families?
- What challenges would exist in terms of transportation to any new preschool spaces and how would these be addressed?

c. Comprehensive Services and Family Engagement

The plan should consider ways to support family-school connections, build families' understanding of child development and ways to support children's learning at home and refer families to other services as needed. The needs of families in the community should be discussed and the plan should be designed to address these needs and support increased school success for children. Training needs of staff should also be addressed.

The plan will identify the types of comprehensive services that programs will provide, the referral process for these services and the providers of such services. A plan for building capacity to provide such services and funding for any contracted services should be included.

A plan for outreach to families should also be considered that ensures that families in need of the preschool services are aware of the services and that families understand the potential benefits of participation. Experience with current PEG programs suggests that

extensive outreach is required, particularly when a program is new; the resources, community partners and approach to such outreach should also be discussed.

Some specific questions to consider are:

- How will these programs engage with diverse families and who will be responsible for outreach and communication?
- How will referrals to comprehensive services be handled and who will provide them?
- What resources are needed to provide these services?

d. Inclusion

The plan must address how the LEA and ELPs would work together to best meet the needs of children with identified disabilities as well as those for whom a disability may exist that has not yet been identified. Questions to consider include:

- How could inclusive special education services be provided with a minimum of disruption and transition for children involved?
- How would communication with families take place?
- Who would the SPED team include?
- How would transportation be handled?
- What would the roles and responsibilities be for LEA and ELP staff in terms of screening, assessment and transition to kindergarten?

e. Curriculum and Assessment

The plan must consider the tools that will be used within and across partners both in the provision of an evidence-based curriculum as well as a system of formative assessment of children's growth and learning. Consider the following:

- What tools would be selected? If the community would plan to use any tool other than Teaching Strategies Gold™ as required in the PEG program, describe the reasons why.
- Would the partners share one tool or allow for differences?
- How would professional development opportunities on curriculum and assessment be shared across LEA and ELP partners?
- Would coaching for teachers be offered?
- If so, who would be responsible for hiring and supervising coaches?
- How would assessment information be shared at times of transition such as the transition to kindergarten?

f. Birth to Grade 3 Alignment

Successful preschool services blend seamlessly with services and programming that children and families receive before and after their preschool experience. The strategic plan funded by this grant must address with specific examples, the following:

- Manners in which this community has aligned and will continue to align services across the Birth to Grade 3 continuum.

- How planned activities would support or enhance EEC and Department of Elementary and Secondary Education grant funded activities including: Full Day Kindergarten, Coordinated Family and Community Engagement, Educator Provider Support, Early Childhood Mental Health and Early Childhood Special Education Entitlement Grant (Fund Code 262) and Inclusive Preschool Learning Environments Grant (Fund Code 391) funding. Communities that are recipients of Department of Public Health Home Visiting Grants (MIECHV) should address alignment with these resources and services as well.

3. Costs

Plans should be made to predict the costs of the programs proposed. In planning for costs, consideration of local resources, cost savings that can be achieved through collaboration and integration of services and in-kind donations by collaborating organizations should be considered. A plan for sustainability should also be addressed that describes city, state, philanthropic resources that could be expected to support programming in the long term. The plan should also include achievable interim steps towards full implementation.