



**Early Learning Collaborative Council Cohort IV RFP
Questions and Answers
Amendment Number One
October 18, 2021**

1. Where do I email my application once it is complete?

You may email your completed application to: RFXS@mdek12.org. The subject line should read: *Early Learning Collaborative Council Pre-Kindergarten Application Cohort IV*

2. Our district does not have Head Start in our district/catchment area; however, there is a Head Start program in our county. Are we required to work with this Head Start program that is within our county?

Yes

3. Is the grant applicant the school district or Head Start?

The grant applicant or the "lead partner" can be the public-school district or other nonprofit entity with the instructional expertise and operational capacity to manage the early learning collaborative's pre-Kindergarten program as described in the collaborative's approved application for funds.

4. Is this a grant for existing collaboratives?

No, this grant application is only for new early learning collaboratives.

5. The application mentions Appendices D, E and F. Where are these appendices located?

These appendices are created by the applicant. This information you will provide in the application. Please see guidance in number 7 in Formatting Directions on page 8.

6. Can the RFP be submitted without a school district?

No, at least one partner must be a public-school district. The other required partner must be a Head Start Center if one exists within the boundaries of the collaborative.

7. What are Letters of Support?

Letters of Support are letters from all partners in stating their willingness to partner, collaborate, and abide by the guidelines in the establishment and development of the ELC.

8. Where can Appendix E be located?

Appendix E should be a Schedule of Findings and Questioned Costs. The applicant must provide this document.

9. Can a blended pre-k funded district apply for this grant?

Yes, however there must be other pre-k classrooms available as collaborative classrooms. For example: **Classroom A** could be a blended pre-k classroom, while **Classroom B** could be a collaborative classroom. Therefore, **Classroom A** could not be a blended and a collaborative classroom.

10. If we charge tuition, can we still apply for this grant?

Yes.

11. Would it be allowable for a school district to have Co-Directors so that the 80% time commitment could be split to gain the two preference points?

Yes. However, each director must have the instructional expertise and operational capacity to implement the collaborative's proposed plan as well delineate clear and defined responsibilities. Please see section B. Capacity to Fulfill Duties of Lead Partner on page 26 in the Early Learning Collaborative RFP.

12. One elementary school in the district has pre-k classrooms. Does this make the district eligible to apply?

Yes. The Lead Partner must serve four-year-old children in a classroom by directly providing pre-K instruction to four-year-old children. Please see **section A. Organizational Structure of Lead Partner** on page 25 in the Early Learning Collaborative RFP.

13. Will a collaborative be penalized because the Head Start program does not want to participate?

Yes. At least one partner must be a public-school district and the other a Head Start Center, **if one exists**, within the boundaries of the collaborative. If there is a Head Start within the city school district attendance zone or children in the city are served in the county Head Start location, they must be included in the collaborative. The collaborative also must coordinate enrollment in the prekindergarten program with the Head Start agency, and not cause a reduction in children

served by the Head Start program. Please see page 27, C. Partners within the Proposed Collaborative in the Early Learning Collaborative RFP.

14. Is a district eligible to be a collaborative if there is no Head Start center in the district or in the service area of the proposed collaborative?

Yes, the district is eligible, but must include the Head Start center in the county. At least one partner must be a public-school district, and the other partner must be a Head Start center. Licensed childcare partners are strongly encouraged to participate. Please see page 27, section C. Partners within the Proposed Collaborative in the Early Learning Collaborative RFP. NOTE: Every county is served by a Head Start program.

15. What is the suggested pay scale for the pre-K coordinator or manager?

The pay scale for the pre-K coordinator or manager is determined by the lead partner entity. New applicants may seek guidance from existing collaboratives to help determine the pay scale for the pre-k coordinator. A list of the existing collaborative coordinators can be found at www.mdek12.org/ec.

16. Will the district application be penalized for not already being established as a separate collaborative?

No. The previous establishment of the collaborative does not determine eligibility of the application. The application will be scored based on the information provided in the proposal.

17. Please give a detailed example of how the charts on page 50, Sample Chart, should be completed.

Complete the chart to report expected revenue in Appendix C on page 60. The sample for this chart is located on page 50. Local matching funds *must* meet or exceed state funds. Cash revenue must be enough to cover expected expenses.

Source	Amount	Funding Type	
State Funds—Full-Day Children 100 of Full-Day 4-year-old Children X \$2,500	\$250,000	Available Amount	Pending
State Funds—Half-Day Children (number) of Half-Day 4-year-old Children X \$1,250	\$0	Available Amount	Pending
Local Matching Funds Source Title I Funds	\$200,000	Cash	Committed
Local Matching Funds Source District Funds	\$100,000	In-Kind	Secured
Local Matching Funds Source Head Start	\$50,000	In-Kind	Secured

Source	Amount	Funding Type	
Local Matching Funds Source Tax Credit	\$100,000	Cash	Pending
TOTALS	Total Available Amount: \$250,000 Total In-Kind: \$150,000 Overall TOTAL: \$700,000	Total Pending: \$350,000 Total Committed: \$200,000 Total Secured: \$150,000	

Note:

Pending – awaiting confirmation and possession of the funding

Committed – to obligate funds

Secured – funds that are assured or certain

Available Amount – funding available to utilize for the project

18. Page 8 of the RFP states “Required forms, resumes, and reference letters that are to be included in the body of the proposal are not subject to page limitations.” What resumes are supposed to be included?

The applicant will determine the relevant resumes that need to be included in the proposal. Resumes could include individuals such as the staff, pre-k coordinator, and lead partner administration.

19. If an applicant is requesting improvement of existing pre-k programs, can the applicant still request \$2,500 for each child already enrolled in existing pre-k programs or does it have to be for new seats only? (Page 15 states, “It is the intent of MDE to award approximately 2,578 pre-K slots for 4-year-old children through this grant competition.”)

Yes. All pre-k seats, either in an existing or new classroom, will be funded as described on pages 14 – 15 in section 18. Award Amounts.

20. In anticipation of the release of this grant, the district started two new pre-k classes paid for/operated by the school district with state/local funds. If awarded, can the district use grant funds to support these students?

Yes. The lead partner must implement all requirements of the grant in the current school year.

21. On page 47, are the amounts requesting be paid directly from the Early Learning Collaborative Grant total not to exceed \$2,500 per child?

Yes. Funding will be provided to Early Learning Collaboratives based on the funding allocation of \$2,500 per student enrolled in a full-day program and \$1,250 per student enrolled in a half day program proposed in the program’s application.

22. On page 47, does “state funds” refer to the funds we are requesting be paid directly from the Early Learning Collaborative Grant?

Yes.

23. Do applicants need to show that the Early Learning Collaborative matches 100% (or exceed 100%) per category?

No, matching funds need to equal the total grant funding request, not per category expenditures.

24. Should the school district be the lead partner of the Early Learning Collaborative, or should two districts share the lead partner responsibilities?

A "lead partner" is a public-school district or other nonprofit entity with the instructional expertise and operational capacity to manage the early learning collaborative's pre-Kindergarten program as described in the collaborative's approved application for funds. The lead partner serves as the fiscal agent for the collaborative and shall disburse awarded funds in accordance with the collaborative's approved application. The lead partner must facilitate a professional learning community for the teachers in the pre-Kindergarten program and lead the collaborative. The lead partner ensures that the collaborative adopts and implements curriculum and assessments that align with the comprehensive early learning standards. **The public-school district shall be the lead partner if no other qualifying lead partner is selected.**

One entity must be the lead partner to manage the collaborative's fiscal component. The following describes the partners that must be included in a collaborative.

- a) Lead Partner: School district or nonprofit entity (must have a classroom)
- b) Partner classrooms: Head Start, licensed childcare, private or parochial school, school district (at least one classroom in this group)
- c) Head Start: must be included if one is in existence

If not, would the second district be considered a partner? Yes

15. Space is VERY limited in the local city and county schools, so could each partner have one or two classes at the local school and partner with a childcare center and Head Start?

Yes, each partner must have one classroom with a **minimum of five (5) four-year-old** children.

One entity must be the lead partner to manage the collaborative's fiscal component. The following describes the partners that must be included in a collaborative.

- a) Lead Partner: School district or not-for-profit entity (must have a classroom)
- b) Partner classrooms: Head Start, licensed childcare, private or parochial school, school district (at least one classroom in this group)
- c) Head Start: must be included if one is in existence

16. If Head Start is included as a site, and the Head Start begins class later than the schools, how would that work?

The collaborative must coordinate enrollment in the prekindergarten program with the Head Start agency and should not cause a reduction in children served by the Head Start program. All classes in the collaborative must start on the same calendar day, as designated by the Lead Partner in collaboration with other partners.

17. Why is OWL not listed in the approved Pre-K curricula section?

Opening the World of Learning (OWL) is not being printed any longer. If the proposed collaborative has documentation of enough copies of the curriculum for every classroom that would be included in the collaborative, the proposed program may use OWL. If not, the proposed program would need to refer to section G. Curriculum on page 38 of the application.

18. Are private schools or childcare centers eligible to apply?

A not-for-profit entity can apply however, a public school district and Head Start must be included as partners.

19. Is this grant for Mississippi only?

Yes. Pre-K programs must be located in the state of Mississippi.

20. Is this RFP for special needs childcare only?

No. To be funded, collaboratives must demonstrate a need for pre-Kindergarten services by showing either low academic achievement in the school districts participating in the collaborative or a high number and percentage of children without quality pre-Kindergarten options. Please see section B. Need for Pre-Kindergarten on page 30 of the RFP.

21. Do I need to email and mail the RFP submission?

The RFP can be mailed OR emailed. Please see the submission and delivery directions on page 9 of the RFP.

22. How can I access the Informational Webinar that I missed?

Please go to this web address: <https://www.mdek12.org/EC>.

23. Please clarify the budget expenditure timeline section. All grantees' budgets must meet the following requirements:

- June 1st is the last day to modify budget.
- June 30th is the last day to spend for previous year with liquidations by July 12th.
- Budget requests are due 1st of each month.
- Please see the complete list on pages 44 – 45 of the RFP.

24. Must all partners attend the interviews, if selected?

All partners are strongly encouraged to participate in the interview process.

25. If school is already using the OWL (Opening the World of Learning) curriculum, can they continue to use it?

See the response to question 17.

26. Is Focus on Pre-K a paid curriculum? I do not see anywhere you can order it.

No, the curriculum is a free curriculum. However, you must order supplies/materials to support it. You can download the curriculum at: <https://www.bpsearlylearning.org/focus-on-k0-k1>.

27. If our current classrooms do not meet the requirements for a collaborative, are we still eligible if the new classrooms will meet those requirements?

All classes, beginning in August 2022, must meet all collaborative requirements according to the Collaborative Act of 2013. This grant is to ensure all classrooms are increasing quality.

28. If we apply for a small number of classrooms this year, and then see we can expand the following year, can the grant be amended/expanded the following year?

No. Once the program applies for a certain allotment of children, the negotiated amount is what the awarded collaboratives will be funded for each year.

29. We currently have four 4-year-old classrooms and two 3-year-old classrooms. These are currently funded through a combination of tuition and federal funds. If we were successful with partnering with our local Head Start and received the collaborative grant, could we target collaborative funds toward existing 4-year-old classrooms and possible expansion while continuing to fund our 3-year-old classrooms through tuition and federal funds? Must the 3-year-old classrooms become part of the collaborative?

Yes. Collaborative funding will only be allotted for 4-year-old children. Classrooms serving only three-year-old children are not eligible for the funding or able to be part of the collaborative program.

30. I am having trouble opening the application. Is there any other way to access the (RFP) application?

Please request assistance from the technology department at your entity to assist with this challenge.

31. Can grant funds be used by entities serving children (in the collaborative) for high quality early childhood substitute staffing?

No. Substitute staffing is a non-allowable expense. Therefore, grant funds cannot be used. Please see page 15 for a full list of allowable and non-allowable expenses in section 19. Use of Funds.

32. Are we (a state university that operates an early childhood center) eligible for the RFP for the Early Learning Collaborative PreK Application?

Please refer to section A. Organizational Structure of Lead Partner on page 25.

33. We did not send a Notice of Intent to Apply; can I still apply?

Yes. Please see the guidance on page 6, number 4. Notice of Intent to Apply.

Amendment Number One

NOTE: *This amendment one is hereby made a part of the Mississippi Department of Education's Request for Proposals. The Vendor acknowledges receipt of said amendment and is made aware of the changes contained therein. By signing this form, the Offeror accepts the changes as part of the contract requirement.*

Authorized Signature

Date

Printed Name