MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION
EQUITY AND EXCELLENCE

GRANT INFORMATION GUIDE

Maryland Rebuilds: Grant Opportunity Transforming Maryland's Early Childhood Education System for the Future

Maryland State Department of Education
200 West Baltimore Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21201

Deadline
November 10, 2022
No later than 11:59 p.m. EST

MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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Secretary-Treasurer, Maryland State Board of Education

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Deputy Superintendent, Teaching and Learning

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Assistant State Superintendent, Division of Early Childhood

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Letter from the State Superintendent

Dear Maryland Early Childhood Educators, Child Care Providers, Parents, and Community Members:

Maryland Rebuilds is a unique grant opportunity that will help the state as it emerges from over two years of a devastating pandemic and the reverberating economic impact on child care providers. In the last 24 months, MSDE has distributed over $300 million in federal grants to stabilize and sustain the state's licensed child care programs and its working.

On March 30, 2020, only 29% of child care providers had reopened after being closed due to the state of emergency. Today, 98% of currently licensed programs are operating, though many still not at full capacity. Child care supply was declining in Maryland prior to the pandemic, but the pandemic accelerated that decline. In the last few months, we have begun to see an uptick in the number of new programs applying for and securing licensure. In that time, our dedicated licensing specialists in every region have assisted over 900 child care programs with opening their programs.

The pandemic has also had an impact on the school readiness of our young learners. In the first year of the pandemic, there was a 25% decline in prekindergarten enrollment. Most of the children receiving instruction attended early learning programs virtually. This year's Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) data reflect this and show only 40% of Maryland's kindergarteners entered classrooms prepared to fully participate in kindergarten. This drop in readiness scores is a 7-point decrease from the 2019–2020 (47%) school year, the last time the KRA was administered. The majority of kindergarteners (60%) do not demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and behavior to actively engage in the kindergarten curriculum. A full 33% of kindergarteners are approaching readiness and may require additional instruction while 27% of kindergarteners are identified as emerging on the KRA and will require targeted support.

Maryland Leads, launched in February, will help Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) spur initiatives to Grow Your Own Staff and scale instructional practices aligned to the Science of Reading to put students on the path to meet the college and career readiness standards set forth by the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. Scaling up evidence-based programs will drive results, particularly for children who need the most support and who were most affected by the pandemic. The initiative provides us with the opportunity to work directly with our school systems to build proof points and solve major instructional challenges in our state. Complementing this investment, *Maryland Rebuilds* gives us the opportunity to work directly with child care providers and early childhood educators, support families and children, and address systemic issues in the child care system so that all children have an equitable start in learning.

Research shows the early years are the most critical time in brain development. *Maryland Rebuilds* is a forward-looking grant initiative that envisions a child care system that works for all children, families, child care providers, and educators, especially those that have been historically underserved. Through this grant initiative, we hone in on six high-leverage strategies and provide concrete, actionable focus areas, exemplar program models, related research, and the funds and partnerships necessary to implement those strategies.

I will continue to say that a return to pre-pandemic conditions is not good enough. Gaps and inequities existed then, and they will continue to persist unless we do something differently. The pandemic has made clear that our child care programs, early childhood educators, families and young children are in need of greater support than we have been providing. It's going to take ambitious and innovative efforts and deep levels of engagement to elevate the early childhood education profession to build a strong educational foundation and realize the vision for learning set by the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. We are called to do this to realize and sustain excellent educational and social-emotional outcomes for all children, including our

most vulnerable children: children with disabilities, multilingual children, children experiencing homelessness, and children from low-income families.

Maryland Rebuilds provides every community in the state the opportunity and inspiration to meet this challenge.

Best,

Mohammed Choudhury
State Superintendent of Schools

Program Description

Maryland Rebuilds is a Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) grant opportunity designed to support the state's child care system in utilizing federal funds to stabilize, strengthen, and sustain the child care system and mitigate the impact from the COVID-19 pandemic. Applications from eligible applicants will help families find and meet the high cost of child care; assist child care providers to improve the quality of their programs; provide access for children and families to mental health supports and services; offer multiple supports for the early childhood workforce; and increase the resilience of family child care businesses.

In August 2021, MSDE held three statewide virtual town halls with nearly 1,300 child care providers and parents across the state to hear their priorities for the $193 million in federal funding made available to Maryland through American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act. Key priorities raised by participants include support recruitment and retention of child care staff with pay increases; fully-fund professional development and training for child care staff; reduce or waive copayments for parents who need to use a scholarship to access child care; expand criteria that would enable more low-income families access to child care scholarships; and provide mental health support throughout communities, schools, and child care settings to make these resources widely available for children, families, and child care providers.

In addition, participants requested that MSDE provide ample information, available in multiple formats and languages about how to access federal funds and receive support, to ensure funds are widely and equitably accessible to child care providers across the state. MSDE heard the needs of stakeholders in the virtual town hall meetings and created the Maryland Rebuilds grant opportunity in response to those needs. To transform early childhood systems in Maryland, grants will be awarded under six high-leverage strategies:

- Expanding Access to Quality Child Care
- Early Learning Models of Excellence
- Expanding Mental Health Supports and Services
- Growing a Highly Effective Child Care Workforce
- Boosting Family Child Care
- Advancing a Coordinated Prekindergarten Enrollment System

Each high-leverage strategy is further defined with specific requirements. Applicants must choose at least one of the strategies and provide a description of how planned activities align with the strategy, what products and/or services will be delivered, and the expected impact of the work on the early childhood community.

NAME OF GRANT PROGRAM

Maryland Rebuilds

AUTHORIZATION

American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act of 2021; Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG)

PURPOSE

To support the state's child care system in utilizing federal funds to stabilize, strengthen, and sustain the child care system and mitigate the impact from the COVID-19 pandemic.

DISSEMINATION

This Grant Information Guide was released on August 30, 2022.

DEADLINE

Applications are due no later than 11:59 p.m. on November 10, 2022.

GRANT PERIOD

December 1, 2022 – June 30, 2024

TOTAL FUNDING AVAILABLE

$43 million

ESTIMATED NUMBER OF GRANTS

40-55

SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

Applicants must submit the Maryland Rebuilds Application and all required attachments no later than 11:59 p.m. November 10th, 2022 via email to marylandrebuilds.msde@maryland.gov.

All deliverables must meet current Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.1 Level AA) accessibility standards as outlined in Senate Bill 617.

STATE RESPONSIBILITIES

The MSDE is responsible for providing required information, data, documentation, and technical assistance to facilitate the grantee's performance of the work and will provide such additional assistance when requested.

PROGRAM CONTACT

> Andre Murray
> Program Manager, Division of Early Childhood Education
> (410) 767-0583
> marylandrebuilds.msde@maryland.gov

Use of Funds

Funds may be used for:
- Salaries and wages
- Instructional materials
- Marketing tools
- Translation services
- Consulting and technical assistance
- Supplies and materials

Funds may not be used for:
- Capital improvements
- Cost(s) incurred prior to the approval of the grant

Eligibility

Non-profit organizations, Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs), Local Education Agencies (LEAs), Local Early Childhood Advisory Councils (LECACs), Judy Centers, private child care providers, and public prekindergarten programs are eligible to apply for funding depending on the high-leverage strategy. Partnerships and collaborative entities are also encouraged to apply.

The MSDE reserves the right to take into consideration several goals when making awards: achieving a distribution of services and support that aligns with differences in geographic need; increasing the participation of underrepresented demographic subgroups; and broadening award recipients to applicants who have not previously been eligible for or successful in applying to a State grant program.

Getting Started

Learn

- ❖ Read this document in its entirety as it provides a comprehensive overview of the various opportunities to participate, application process, and grant program timeline. Continue to monitor the Maryland Rebuilds webpage for more information and updates.
- ❖ Explore the links to additional resources and readings identified as "Inspiration from the Field" for each of the six grant strategies.
- ❖ Learn more by attending live information sessions which will be recorded and posted online for asynchronous viewing.

Consider

- ❖ Assess the needs of children, families, and child care programs to determine which strategies best meet the identified needs and begin planning.
- ❖ Consider how the high-leverage strategies align with the community efforts to rebuild the child care system.
- ❖ Plan to use this opportunity to innovate and inspire while also planning for sustainability.

Collaborate

- ❖ Identify the primary point of contact and key collaborators responsible for the application submission.
- ❖ Build in opportunities to gather input from early childhood educators, child care providers, community leaders, and families.
- ❖ Utilize the strategy sessions and office hours hosted by MSDE to pressure test ideas, gain new insights, and refine applications.

Apply

- ❖ Attend one General Information Session and appropriate Strategy Information Sessions. (Required)
- ❖ Submit the online grant application with appendices. (Required)

High-Leverage Strategies

Expanding Access to Quality Child Care

Affordable, accessible, and high-quality child care is vital for families residing in Maryland. Applicants will leverage historic new investments in the Child Care Scholarship program and connect families with safe and affordable high-quality child care. Applicants may choose from the following two focus areas:

- Create an early childhood regional technical assistance center(s) for families. Key activities must include:

    o Increased participation in the Child Care Scholarship program, with special attention to underrepresented children and underserved regions in Maryland;

    o Connect families who are underserved to the services and support they need, including multilingual families, by 1) developing an outreach plan targeting underserved populations, which includes engagement through a variety of media, and 2) developing an assessment plan to ensure that campaigns are reaching the intended audiences;

    o Develop and implement a training program for Family Support Specialists, who will work in the technical assistance center assisting families in accessing the Child Care Scholarship program and other benefits;

    o Providing families with tools and support as they go through the process of determining eligibility and applying for a Child Care Scholarship;

    o Providing hands-on, multilingual support to families whose primary language spoken in the home is a language other than English to ensure those families receive what they need;

    o Providing resources to families to children who have a developmental delay or disability, or a special need; and

    o Assisting families in locating a child care provider who is participating in the Maryland EXCELS program.

- Develop a regional outreach and support program to increase child care provider participation in **and** advancement within the Maryland EXCELS system. Key activities must include:

    o Increased number of child care providers participating in Maryland EXCELS and who have obtained Maryland Accreditation through an outreach and marketing plan which includes engagement through a variety of media, through and an assessment plan to ensure that campaigns are reaching the intended audiences; and through direct Department outreach to potential participants;

    o Increased number of child care providers moving up through the levels within Maryland EXCELS via support and professional learning offerings (professional learning opportunities can be delivered through partnerships with educational institutions or organizations). The application must include an advancement timeline;

    o Connecting providers to resources such as the Maryland Accreditation Support Fund and Maryland EXCELS Quality Assurance Specialists;

    o Providing technical assistance to providers to complete forms and required documents for participation in the Maryland EXCELS program; and

    o Providing support and technical assistance to child care providers whose primary language is not English.

Inspiration from the Field

> **Strategies to Build Effective Kinship Navigator Programs**
>
> *Child Trends*

> **A Closer Look at Latino Access to Child Care Subsidies**
>
> *CLASP*

> **Kentucky's Child Care Resource and Referral Network**
>
> *ChildCare Aware of Kentucky*

Additional Readings

- Finding Child Care in Two Chicago Communities: The Voices of Latina Mothers *(University of Chicago)*
- Insights on Access to Quality Child Care for Children with Disabilities and Special Needs (*University of Chicago*)
- Child Trends' Evaluation of the Abriendo Puertas Program (*Child Trends)* & Abriendo Puertas | Opening Doors
- Meeting Families Where They Are: Child Care Navigation Supports Through Primary Care (*Children's Hospital of Philadelphia*)
- Child Care is Getting More Support from Some Private Companies *(NPR)*

Potential Applicants

- Technical assistance centers
- Non-profit organizations
- LEAs
- Partnerships and collaborative entities are also encouraged to apply

Funding for this Strategy

- Total amount available: $4 million
- Estimated number of grants awarded: 3-6
- Average range of award: $500,000 - $1 million

Early Learning Models of Excellence

Research shows that when children attend high-quality early learning programs, they start school better prepared to engage in the kindergarten curriculum. Maryland is expanding support for improving the quality of early childhood settings. Private child care and public prekindergarten programs that demonstrate exceptional quality will serve as Early Learning Models of Excellence for other programs throughout the state. MSDE will select 16 sites to provide opportunities for observation, professional learning, and development of resources to enhance the quality of other programs. Models of Excellence sites need not be a model site for all areas of site operations and learning. Sites may focus on and excel at one or more areas of operation and practice, particularly those areas listed below (e.g., business practices; early literacy aligned to the Science of Reading; or reduction of exclusionary discipline practices). Selected sites may use up to June 30, 2023, as a planning period. Applicants must address all focus areas below:

- Meet the Blueprint for Maryland's Future Prekindergarten requirements if serving 3- and 4-year-olds through participation in the publicly funded prekindergarten;

- Meet or exceed Maryland EXCELS Quality Rating Level 3; and

- Demonstrate use of the Maryland Early Learning standards and College and Career Readiness standards.

Additionally, applicants must choose to address one or more of the following:

  - Demonstrate adoption of a high-quality, content-rich, research-based, and culturally relevant curriculum (see, for example, the fourteen criteria used to assess curricula in the Curriculum Consumer Report available from the Head Start Early Childhood Learning & Knowledge Center).

  - Show evidence-based instructional practices in early literacy aligned to the Science of Reading and in mathematics;

  - Show evidence-based instructional practices in socio-emotional development;

  - Demonstrate implementation of an assessment tool and provide examples of how the data is used to support instruction;

  - Provide evidence of partnerships with community organizations such as IHEs, nonprofit organizations, and community-based organizations, such as Judy Centers, that support children's learning and health for inclusion of children with complex learning needs;

  - Have experience serving, or possess the skills to serve, children with a developmental delay, disability, or special need;

  - Have experience serving or possess the skills to serve, children whose primary spoken language at home is a language other than English;

  - Have experience serving, or possess the skills to serve, children experiencing homelessness; and/or

  - Demonstrate a track record of reducing exclusionary discipline practices.

It will be required that selected private child care providers and public prekindergarten programs be open and enthusiastic about collaborating, sharing ideas and resources, serve as a "learning lab," for providers and programs across the state, and continue to learn and grow as professionals as they serve as Models of Excellence. For this strategy, the applicant must describe the plan to:

  - Participate in the Maryland Models of Excellence network;

  - Highlight an area of expertise that your program is doing exceptionally well and could serve as a model or resource to other programs in Maryland (effective practices in minimally-resources environments; implementing a curriculum and reaching assessment targets; providing

comprehensive wraparound services; supporting multilingual families and children; serving children with complex learning or developmental needs, etc.);

- o Train and support other providers/programs to identify potential partners in their area;
- o Host or provide professional learning opportunities that help other child care providers/programs understand the benefits that strategic partnerships can yield;
- o Demonstrate effective implementation of the Maryland early learning standards, a high-quality, content-rich, research-based, and culturally relevant curriculum (see above), an assessment tool, and evidenced-based instructional practices;
- o Share data that demonstrates improvement in learning for student groups; and
- o Be open to serving the provider/program/public prekindergarten community in a collaborative way.

Inspiration from the Field

> Early Childhood Education and the Science of Reading: Recipes to Last a Lifetime

EdView 360 Blog Series

> Reducing Exclusionary Discipline Practices in Early Childhood Education

New America

> Program Of Excellence: Children First

National Head Start Association

Additional Readings

- Promoting Equity for Young Multilingual Children and Their Families (*WIDA*)
- Creating Inclusive Environments for Infants and Toddlers (*Child Care Technical Assistance Network*)
- Supporting Every Young Learner: Maryland's Guide to Early Childhood Pedagogy, Birth to Age 8 (*MSDE*)
- Maryland's Early Childhood Family Engagement Framework (*The Maryland Family Engagement Coalition*)

Potential Applicants

- Private child care providers
- Public prekindergarten programs

Funding for this Strategy

- Total amount available: $6 million
- Estimated number of grants awarded: 16
- Average range of award: $200,000-$400,000

Expanding Mental Health Supports and Services

The pandemic has impacted the learning and development of many children. Some child care programs have seen an increase in challenging behaviors and need greater support. Applicants will expand existing mental health programs and/or create new supports to address the mental health needs of infants, toddlers and young children. Selected grantees may use up to June 30, 2023, to develop the curriculum. Applicants will select at least one of the three focus areas below:

- Coordinate with state and local partners (Judy Centers, Early Childhood Advisory Councils, Local Infants and Toddler Programs) to develop a plan to connect families to mental health support services. Key activities must include:

  o A community engagement plan that expands beyond marketing to raise awareness for mental health support services related to early intervention and resilience activities with special attention to underserved populations and regions in Maryland; and

  o Training for families on topics such as trauma informed care, managing stress at any age, teaching parents about school readiness, and providing positive foundations for children.

- Develop a statewide social-emotional development curriculum that aligns with the Pyramid Model Framework and the Social Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (SEFEL), and the Early Learning Social Emotional Standards. Key elements must include:

  o Curriculum that is inclusive of students who have a development delay, disability, or sensory impairment;

  o A plan to train a cohort of providers, educators and support staff working in underserved regions across Maryland to pilot the curriculum; and

  o A coaching model that supports the pilot and implementation of the curriculum (i.e. training, technical assistance, mentorship).

- Coordinate with state and local partners to develop a cohort of child care providers, early childhood education teachers, and support staff for the prevention and response to challenging behaviors in young children using evidence-based practices and trauma-informed care (e.g. National Pyramid Model, Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation) across a continuum of home, school, and community environments or underserved geographic locations.

Inspiration from the Field

> We know how to help young kids cope with the trauma of the last year — but will we do it?

The Hechinger Report

> There's a Mental-Health Crisis Among American Children. Why?

The New York Times Magazine

> A Day in the Life of an Early Childhood Mental Health Consultant

Center of Excellence for IECMH Consultation

Additional Readings

- InBrief: Early Childhood Mental Health (*Harvard University)*

- A Resource for Developing Integrated Strategies to Support the Social and Emotional Wellness of Children (*Administration for Children and Families)*

- Pyramid Model Equity Coaching Guide *(NCPMI)*

- The Center of Excellence for Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (*IECMHC)*

- The Basics of Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health: A Briefing Paper (*Zero to Three*)

Potential Applicants

- Technical assistance centers

- Non-profit organizations

- LEAs

- IHEs

- Partnerships and collaborative entities are also encouraged to apply

Funding for this Strategy

- Total amount available: $6 million

- Estimated number of grants awarded: 15

- Average range of award: $200,000 - $600,000

Growing a Highly Effective Child Care Workforce

A critical element to ensure success for children in child care and early education is a well-qualified and well-compensated workforce. Applicants will design and launch child care apprenticeship programs and other innovative initiatives to grow the pipeline of family home child care providers, and other support staff. Applicants must select from the following focus areas:

- Develop a paid apprenticeship program aimed at recruiting and training individuals or groups of individuals to enter the child care workforce, with an emphasis on gaining clinical experience that builds representation across diverse communities and working with vulnerable populations;

- Develop and implement coursework that includes best practices when working with children with a developmental delay, disability or special need, as well as children who come from homes where English is not the primary spoken language and children experiencing homelessness;

- Through financial incentives, provide a progression of training and professional development opportunities for caregivers, teachers, and child care providers to increase their effectiveness in supporting children's development and readiness for kindergarten;

- Build programs to support individuals in changing careers and entering the education field; and/or

- Establish an alternative early childhood education teacher preparation program.

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Inspiration from the Field

> Early Childhood Education Apprenticeships: Why, What, and How

National Center on Early Childhood Teaching and Learning

> The child care worker shortage is reaching crisis proportions nationally. Could Milwaukee provide the answer?

The Hechinger Report

> Apprenticeships May Help Build the Child Care Workforce

Marketplace

Additional Readings

- Teacher Turnover in Early Childhood Education (*Brown University*)

- How the Early Education Career Institute's ECE Apprenticeship Program is Helping Build a Better Future for Children and Childcare Providers (*Early Education Career Institute*)

- Policies, Initiatives, and Resources to Support the ECE Workforce (*Child Trends*)

- A Way Forward: Registered Apprenticeships and Advancing the Early Childhood Workforce (*Bipartisan Policy Center*)

- Supporting the Child Care and Early Education Workforce (*Urban Institute*)

- To Maintain Teacher Diversity, Listen to Teachers of Color (*The Hechinger Report*)

Potential Applicants

- Non-profit organizations

- LEAs

- IHEs

- Partnerships and collaborative entities are also encouraged to apply

Funding for this Strategy

- Total amount available: $11 million

- Estimated number of grants awarded: 4-8

- Average range of award: $500,000 - $3 million

Boosting Family Child Care

Maryland lost hundreds of family child care programs over the last two years. The state has an urgent need to expand the number of family home child care providers in each jurisdiction, particularly in child care deserts, where there are few or no available programs. Sustaining an existing business or starting a new business can be challenging. One powerful strategy to establish and sustain new and existing provider businesses is through an independent, centralized support system, like a Shared Service Alliance. MSDE will consider the regions represented by applicants for this strategy to ensure that all geographic areas across the state are represented and supported. Applicants must select at least one focus area below:

- Develop and implement an incubator that supports individuals who want to start up their own family child care business. Key activities must include:

    o Training and professional learning opportunities surrounding the licensing process, how to open up a business in Maryland, understanding how to file taxes for your new business, how to keep accurate and complete financial and business records, how to start a website, and other business practices;

    o Training and professional learning opportunities on how to maintain your license, as well as opportunities for growth (earning Maryland EXCELS and National Accreditation);

    o Disseminating information on fee support programs such as the Accreditation Support Fund;

    o Creating asynchronous and synchronous learning opportunities for family child care providers to share experiences, including through peer to peer networks,; and

    o Offering coaching and mentorship to providers in their first year of business, including assisting individuals with developing a cost of care analysis in order to project all revenue and expenditures for the first 3 - 5 years of service.

- Design and launch a Shared Services Alliance that benefits from the economies of scale of the State's more than 7,000 providers and will result in:

    o Reduced or shared costs and time through joint purchasing, staff sharing, collaborative contracts, centralized administration, or some combination of this;

    o Shared program or administrative capacity-building using common tools and systems, shared mentoring and supervision, training, and collaborative improvement processes; and

    o Reinvestment of cost and time savings into enhanced program quality.

- Launch programs that support early childhood educators in obtaining a Child Development Associate (CDA) Credentials, Associate's and/or Bachelor's degrees.

Inspiration from the Field

> Case Study: Shared Services Alliances

U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation

> Family Child Care Networks

Bipartisan Policy Institute

> Increasing Qualifications, Centering Equity

NAEYC

Additional Readings

- Shared Services as a Strategy to Support Child Care Providers *(ELC TA)*

- Shared Services: A Strategy for Building Stronger Systems Among Early Care and Education Providers *(Build Initiative)*

- Guide to Starting a Shared Service Alliance (*Opportunities Exchange)*

- Developing a Staffed Family Child Care Network: A Technical Assistance Manual *(National Center on Early Childhood Quality Assurance)*

- Child Development Staff: Resources Available for New Education Requirements *(DC Office of the State Superintendent of Education)*

- Successful Inclusion of Family Child Care Providers in Higher Education Degree Programs and Courses: A Research-to-Practice Guide *(Early Educator Central)*

Potential Applicants

- Technical assistance centers

- Non-profit organizations

- LEAs

- Partnerships and collaborative entities are also encouraged to apply

Funding for this Strategy

- Amount available: $11 million

- Estimated number of grants awarded: 4-8

- Average range of award: $500,000 - $3 million

Advancing a Coordinated Prekindergarten Enrollment System

Maryland depends on a well-coordinated early childhood system of programs and services to support children, families and early childhood educators and providers. In addition, the state needs to be able to access data to improve the quality and reach of services. Applicants will design a coordinated prekindergarten enrollment system, strengthen the participation of private providers through parent choice, and support alignment of the birth to age 8 early childhood system. Applicants must address all focus areas below:

- Create a countywide or regional approach to a unified and common prekindergarten enrollment mixed-delivery system that includes options for families to enroll their 3-year-old or 4-year-old in private child care, Head Start, or a school-based program;

- The system must meet Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.1 Level AA);

- The system must be available in other language for families whose primary language spoken at home is a language other than English;

- Provide a robust community engagement plan that includes plans for direct engagement with families and details how families will be made aware of all the prekindergarten options available;

- Articulate a plan to address racial and socioeconomic integration in prekindergarten classrooms, as indicated in the Blueprint for Maryland's Future;

- Identify what supports will be provided to families through the enrollment process, such as how to select an appropriate setting to meet their child's needs and to complete applications required documentation; and

- Provide support for the implementation of a coordinated, unified enrollment system between early childhood and school systems through creating guidance, providing technical assistance, and hosting joint professional learning opportunities.

Inspiration from the Field

> [Coordinated Enrollment Across Early Care and Education Settings](#)

Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center

> [Creating Integrated Early Childhood Education in New York City](#)

The Century Foundation

> [A Guide to Unifying Enrollment: The What, Why, and How for Those Considering It](#)

CRPE

Additional Readings

- [Enroll Indy](#) *(Enroll Indy)*
- [Coordinating Eligibility & Enrollment](#) *(Child Care Technical Assistance Network)*
- [Dozens of Indianapolis Schools, One Application](#) *(The 74)*

Potential Applicants

- Non-profit organizations
- Partnerships and collaborative entities are also encouraged to apply

Funding for this Strategy

- Total amount available: $5 million
- Estimated number of grants awarded: 2-3
- Average range of award: $1 million - $2 million

Current Efforts Underway

MSDE investments in the six high-level strategies outside of the grant programs, above. This section describes current efforts already underway at MSDE to level up and increase access to a strong child care infrastructure in Maryland, including more than $74 million to expand the Child Care Scholarship program through increased reimbursement rates and lowered eligibility cutoffs. Applicants are encouraged to consider how to strategically leverage these resources and, where possible, incorporate and build upon these resources in their grant proposals.

Expanding Access to Quality Child Care

- The Child Care Scholarship (CCS) program provides financial assistance with child care costs to eligible working families in Maryland. Maryland made significant policy changes to the CCS Program in 2022 to increase access to quality child care. Specifically, Maryland has made three historic policy changes to this program:

  - Increased the value of the scholarships used to help cover the cost of child care. The rate rose from the 60th percentile of the tuition charged by child care providers according to the most recent Market Rate Survey (MRS) to the 70th percentile of the MRS.

  - Reduced or eliminated parent copayments. This is an additional amount most parents have been required to pay to use scholarships; Parents who receive certain benefits will have no copay, while other parents will pay a nominal amount.

  - Lowered the threshold of income requirements to qualify for a scholarship. The income threshold rose from the maximum level of income from 65% of State Median Income (SMI) to 75% SMI. The result is a family of four making $90,033 can still qualify for a scholarship (up from $71,525).

  - Family and provider portals for the CCS program will be established in FY 2023 to improve customer service for parents/guardians and child care providers.

- Family Resource Specialists can assist parents and guardians in applying for child care scholarships and help navigate the process including gathering all of the correct documentation that is needed, explain eligibility requirements, and help with questions. Families may call Maryland Family Network for support Monday through Friday between 8:30 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. at 877-261-0060. Family Resource Specialists are available to assist in Spanish and other languages. More information can be found on Maryland Family Network's Family Resource Specialists webpage.

Improving Quality in Early Learning Programs

- Judy Center Early Learning Hubs (Judy Centers) are expanding. Judy Centers prepare children for success in school and life. By connecting families with high-quality, comprehensive, full-day, full-year early education services, the Judy Centers promote school readiness for children ages birth through five. Utilizing a multigenerational approach for families and children, and providing professional development for early childhood educators, Judy Centers help to support families during a child's early years. More information can be found by visiting the Judy Center Early Learning Hubs webpage. The Blueprint legislation added nine new Judy Centers in FY 2023, and American Rescue Plan Act funding allowed MSDE to increase the number of hubs by an additional seven. In FY 2023, there are a total of 85 Judy Centers across all jurisdictions.

- Funding for Child Care Quality Incentive Grant Program was increased. This program, funded through the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, awards funds to child care providers to enhance the quality of care provided to the children of Maryland. Providers may acquire additional training and education to enhance their knowledge of early childhood development and the role providers play in helping children to enter school ready to succeed. Funds can also be used to purchase supplies, materials and equipment to create stimulating learning environments. Apply for funding on the Child Care Quality Incentive Grant program webpage.

- Providers who participate in the Maryland EXCELS are getting an increased bonus. Maryland EXCELS is the state's quality rating and improvement system for licensed child care and early education programs that meet nationally recognized quality standards. Maryland EXCELS promotes quality by awarding quality ratings to Child Care Centers, School-Age Child Care Programs, Family Child Care Homes, and Public Prekindergarten programs. Child care programs at levels 1-5 are eligible for bonuses funded through the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. For more information, visit the Maryland EXCELS webpage.

- Support for state and national accreditation has expanded. Accreditation demonstrates that licensed child care centers and registered family child care homes strive to achieve and maintain a level of quality identified through a rigorous process of self-assessment and program improvement based on quality program standards issued by the accrediting organization. The Accreditation Support Fund covers the cost of pursuing accreditation for licensed child care centers and for registered family child care providers. Child care programs seeking accreditation support may find more information by visiting the Accreditation Support Fund webpage.

Expanding Mental Health Supports and Services

- The Infant Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH) Support Services program has expanded. IECMH Support Services is an evidence-informed intervention designed to build the capacity of early childhood professionals' ability to nurture social and emotional development in infants and young children through the Pyramid Model for Social Emotional Competence. MSDE has also expanded support for Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Certification.

Growing a Highly Effective Child Care Workforce

- Retention and hiring bonuses are offered to participants in the Maryland Child Care Credentialing Program. This new program, established by House Bill 1100, recognizes individual child care providers who increase their qualifications beyond the requirements of state licensing and registration regulations. Six staff credential levels and four administrator levels offer recognition of achievement based on professional development/education, years of experience, and professional activities. Information about the program may be found on the Maryland Child Care Credentialing Program website.

- A child care teacher retention study will be conducted in 2023. Retention of a quality early childhood workforce supports continuity of care for children and families and helps to stabilize the child care system.

- MSDE is partnering with Institutions of Higher Education to launch alternative certification/degree pathways, including programs with flexible delivery options. These programs will help create the high-quality, credentialed staff required for private child care providers to participate in Maryland's mixed-delivery prekindergarten program.

Boosting Family Child Care

- Three Planning Grants for Growing Opportunities for Family Child Care (GOFCC) grants were awarded to support the growth and sustainability of the family child care field. The Maryland State Department of Education will provide $150,000 each to a minimum of three jurisdictions to implement this program in FY 2023. Grant funds must be used to establish and support local pilot programs in increasing the supply of family child care providers and ensuring their sustainability in areas with above average rates of poverty, unemployment, or areas with a lack of available child care providers. Subgrantees must raise local matching funds, including in–kind matching resources at a 1:1 match. They must also collaborate with existing family child care providers during the implementation of the program, provide multilingual outreach to recruit individuals to become registered family child care providers, and provide technical assistance, financial incentives, and start–up assistance to become registered family child care providers. In addition, entities awarded grants must assist newly registered and established family child care providers through technical assistance to achieve quality benchmarks, peer–to–peer mentoring, and financial incentives. They must also establish partnerships with local chambers of commerce, or other local or State organizations for family child care providers that support small businesses and women and minority–owned businesses to provide assistance to recruited individuals or registered family child care providers in implementing best business practices and assistance in achieving financial sustainability.

Advancing a Coordinated Enrollment System

- The new Early Childhood Data System data system is modernizing and expanding. This system provides critical data collection and use for licensing, workforce supports, Child Care Scholarships, and Maryland EXCELS. Other program data, such as data from the Judy Center Early Learning Hubs, Patty Centers, and mixed-delivery prekindergarten, will be accessible through this system. The system will also support the implementation of a unique identifier system for young children to better understand the impact of support and services on child outcomes. These unique identifiers can help ensure data integrity for data in a unified enrollment system.

Customer Service Support Sessions

The Maryland State Department of Education seeks to support any potential applicant in submitting the strongest application possible. Strong program designs are essential to ensuring Maryland Rebuilds delivers upon the goals of the initiative. Customer service and support for Maryland Rebuilds consists of general information and strategy information sessions as well as for appointments, upon request. These sessions and the scheduled dates are listed below.

General Information Sessions

Prior to completing and submitting the application, it is required that applicants attend at least one General Information Session. These sessions provide an overview of the Maryland Rebuilds grant program, requirements, and how to apply. To register for a session, click on a session below. See the dates and times below:

- [September 2, 2022, 1:00 - 2:00 p.m.](#)
- [September 8, 2022 1:00 – 2:00 p.m.](#)

MSDE staff are available to support applicants throughout the submission process. In addition to the information sessions and office hours listed below, applicants may make individual appointments with MSDE staff as needed.

Strategy Sessions

After attending a general information session, applicants must attend a strategy specific session to gain a deeper understanding of the requirements and expectations for the strategy you're interested in. To register for a session, click on a session below. See the dates and times below – click a given time to register:

Strategy	Dates/times
Expanding Access to Quality Child Care	September 6 and September 19 from 10:00 – 11:00 a.m.
Early Learning Models of Excellence	September 6 and September 19 from 2:00 – 3:00 p.m.
Expanding Mental Health Supports and Services	September 7 and September 20 from 10:00 – 11:00 a.m.
Growing a Highly-Effective Child Care Workforce	September 7 and September 20 from 1:00 – 2:00 p.m.
Boosting Family Child Care	September 9 and September 21 from 10:00 – 11:00 a.m.
Advancing a Coordinated Prekindergarten Enrollment System	September 9 and September 21 from 1:00 – 2:00 p.m.

Application

Applicants must submit a completed Maryland Rebuilds electronic application, which can be downloaded on the Maryland Rebuilds webpage. For applicants applying to more than one strategy, a separate application must be submitted for each strategy.

COVER PAGE

Applicants must provide contact information and must identify which strategy they are addressing in the application, as well as the total amount of funding being requested. All applications must be signed by the head of the applying organization.

PLANNING SESSION ATTENDANCE

Applicants are expected to provide the name and titles of all individuals associated with their organization who have attended planning sessions MSDE is hosting for Maryland Rebuilds. This includes both General Information Sessions as well as Strategy Sessions.

EXTENT OF NEED

Provide a description of the challenges and difficulties that this project is designed to address and how it will help Maryland's early childhood system overcome them.

EVIDENCE OF IMPACT

Describe how the proposed plan and strategies being implemented are evidence-based and will lead to the desired impact. Include a description of your experience in terms of effective practices leading to the desired outcomes.

GOALS AND OUTCOMES

Maryland Ready: A Path to School Readiness and Success is Maryland's strategic plan for early education. Applicants must set clear program goals and outcomes that are rooted in Maryland Ready and reflect at least one goal to one of Maryland's statewide system development goals from Maryland Ready:

1. Strengthen availability and access by increasing availability and choice for all families and especially vulnerable families, decreasing barriers, serving more children with special needs in inclusive settings, and improving coordination between ECE and health services.

2. Improve and support program quality by increasing quality across sectors, focusing on equity, increasing kindergarten readiness for all children, and improving capacity to meet infants' and children's mental health needs.

3. Deepen family engagement by increasing families' awareness of high-quality programs, expanding two-generational programming, and enhancing families' opportunities to engage.

4. Ensure successful transition experiences by strengthening institutional support for transitions, supporting families through transitions, and improving transition-focused professional development opportunities.

5. Expand and enhance workforce development by improving professional development opportunities, strengthening equity, coordination and alignment efforts, and improving compensation for ECE professionals.

6. Improve systems for infrastructure, data and resource management by improving coordination across agencies, modernizing the data system, using resources in ways that promote equity, and streamlining funding mechanisms.

PROJECT NARRATIVE (10-PAGE LIMIT)

Proposed Activities

Describe the proposed activities and how they align to the specific strategy selected.

Historically Underserved Groups

Describe how the proposed activities will increase participation and have a positive impact on historically underserved groups.

Timeline

Proposed Activities (sample)	Date of Implementation

Measuring Success

Describe what success for this project would look like and what criteria will be used to determine success.

Key Personnel and Management Plan

The management plan clearly defines the roles, responsibilities, tasks and deadlines of key contributors to make sure your program is a success. Ensure that all administrative and key personnel responsible for the successful implementation and monitoring of the grant requirements are captured here. Applicants must provide one-page resume(s) for all key personnel in the appendix.

Key Personnel

Name	Title, Organization	Responsibilities

BUDGET AND BUDGET NARRATIVE

The project's budget should detail all related project expenses in a separate itemized budget. It should demonstrate the extent to which the budget is reasonable, cost-effective, and integrates other sources of funding. All costs described in the project narrative should appear in the budget narrative and must have a corresponding entry in the itemized budget for that year. Each line must be detailed and specific. General expenses should be broken down into specific line items. There is no page limit for the budget, and it does not count towards the 10-page limit for the project narrative, so be as detailed as possible.

APPENDIX

The following Appendices must be included in the application:

- A signed C-1-25 MSDE budget form
- A signed recipient assurances page
- One-page resumes for all key personnel
- Letters of support from any partners (if applicable)

The Review Process

The review of proposals will be a four-part process:

1. Written applications will be pre-screened for submission requirements and inclusion of all required sections. Applicants not meeting all pre-screen requirements will not be reviewed.

2. A review committee established by the MSDE will evaluate applications using the scoring rubric.

3. Applicants may be scheduled for an oral program presentation as determined by the review committee.

4. Final approval for awards will be determined by the review committee.

Note: The MSDE reserves the right to take into consideration several goals when making awards: achieving a distribution of services and support that aligns with differences in geographic need; increasing the

participation of underrepresented demographic subgroups; and broadening award recipients to applicants who have not previously been eligible for or successful in applying to a State grant program.

Reporting Requirements

Date	Program Milestone
May 1, 2023	Interim report #1 due (programmatic and fiscal)
November 1, 2023	Interim report #2 due (programmatic and fiscal)
May 1, 2024	Interim report #3 due (programmatic and fiscal)
Summer 2024	Attend a collaborative best practice and outcomes session
June 30, 2024	Grant period ends
August 1, 2024	Final report due (programmatic and fiscal)

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) will provide participating eligible applicants with a more detailed implementation timeline once the grant period commences. In addition to the activities above, it will include detailed information related to quarterly meetings with MSDE staff, ensuring continued connection and collaboration throughout the grant period.

Non-Discrimination Statement

MSDE does not discriminate on the basis of age, ancestry/national origin, color, disability, gender identity/expression, marital status, race, religion, sex, or sexual orientation in matters affecting employment or in providing access to programs and activities and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. For inquiries related to Department policy, please contact:

Equity Assurance and Compliance Office
Office of the Deputy State Superintendent for Operations
Maryland State Department of Education
200 W. Baltimore Street - 2nd Floor Baltimore, Maryland 21201-2595 410-767-0123 - voice
410-767-0431 - fax
410-333-6442 - TTY/TDD

The General Education Provisions Act (GEPA), Section 427

Each application must develop and describe the steps the applicant proposes to take to ensure equitable access to, and equitable participation in, the project or activity to be conducted with such assistance, by addressing the special needs of students, teachers, and other program beneficiaries in order to overcome barriers to equitable participation.

Questions

If you have questions about the application or program, please contact the Program Monitor:

Andre Murray
Program Manager, Division of Early Childhood Education
(410) 767-0583
marylandrebuilds.msde@maryland.gov

A customer service specialist will respond to all inquiries within 24 hours or the next business day. A list of frequently asked questions (FAQ) and answers will be posted to the webpage following customer service support sessions.

Grant Application Timeline

Date	Program Milestone
August 30, 2022	Maryland Rebuilds Grant Information Guide and application are released
September 2 from 1:00 – 2:00 p.m. September 8 from 1:00 – 2:00 p.m.	General information sessions
September 6 and September 19 from 10:00 – 11:00 a.m.	Specific strategy sessions: Access to Quality Child Care
September 6 and September 19 from 2:00 – 3:00 p.m.	Specific strategy sessions: Early Learning Models of Excellence
September 7 and September 20 from 10:00 – 11:00 a.m.	Specific strategy sessions: Expanding Mental Health Supports and Services
September 7 and September 20 from 1:00 – 2:00 p.m.	Specific strategy sessions: Growing a Highly-Effective Child Care Workforce
September 9 and September 21 from 10:00 – 11:00 a.m.	Specific strategy sessions: Boosting Family Child Care
September 9 and September 21 from 1:00 – 2:00 p.m.	Specific strategy sessions: Advancing a Coordinated Prekindergarten Enrollment System
November 10, 2022	Application window closes
October - November	The Review Committee evaluates applications
November 10, 2022	MSDE announces grant awards
December 1, 2022 – June 30, 2024	Grant period