

About the grant opportunity

Washington is eligible for up to \$70 million over four years through the U.S. departments of Education and Health & Human Services as part of their preschool development grants. Washington has applied for an **expansion grant** to reach and serve additional eligible preschool children in high-need communities.

The Department of Early Learning, on behalf of Gov. Jay Inslee, submitted Washington's grant application on Oct. 13, 2014. It is expected that successful applicants will be notified in December 2014.

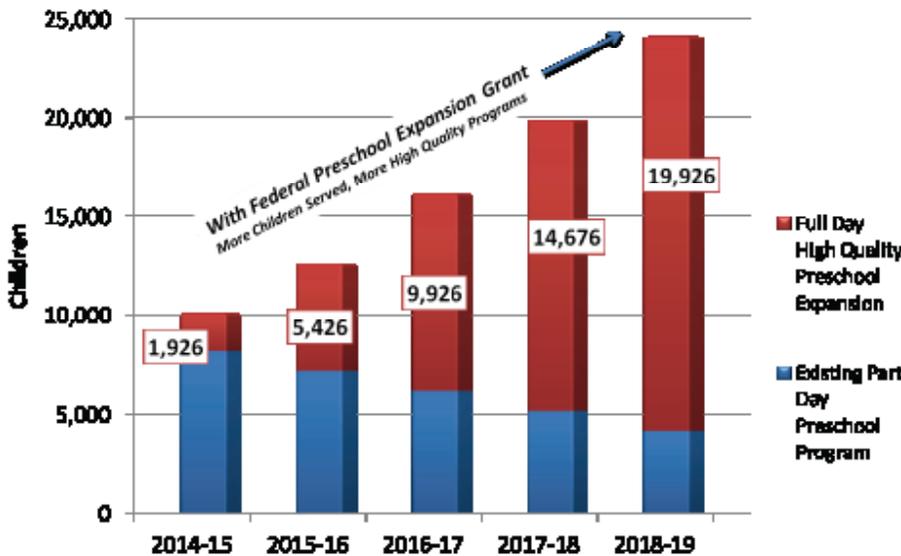
Washington's proposal

Our state has submitted a bold plan to dramatically expand high-quality preschool options in high-need communities around the state, and enhance the quality of existing state preschool slots.

Since 1985, Washington has been operating the Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP), the state-funded comprehensive preschool program for eligible 3- and 4-year-olds. ECEAP ranks high on many quality elements, and this grant provides an opportunity to implement all the components of high-quality preschool named in the grant (see sidebar). In addition, the grant opportunity allows the state to serve even more eligible children.

New federal preschool expansion funds would serve as a powerful catalyst to more than double the number of eligible children receiving high-quality preschool, and improve existing ECEAP slots by 2019.

Washington's preschool expansion proposal



Key expansion grant application requirements

- **High staff qualifications.** Washington's plan: Create new pathways to bachelor's degree; expand scholarships.
- **High-quality professional development for all staff.** Washington's plan: Practice-based coaching; pre-school coach certification.
- **Staff ratios.** Washington's plan: Child care and ECEAP already limit to 20 children per 2 adults; build in new training.
- **Full day.** Washington's plan: Expansion slots will only be available for full-day model.
- **Inclusion.** Washington's plan: Partner with UW Haring Center to increase access to specialized training; increase partnership with developmental preschools.
- **Evidence-based curricula.** Washington's plan: Require programs to use evidence-based curriculum and/or demonstrate curriculum meets criteria across developmental domains.
- **Individualized supports and instruction.** Washington's plan: Increase access to interpreters, mental health services, other supports through shared services.
- **K-3 salaries.** Washington's plan: Implement new salary scale; tie wages to BA attainment, participation in curriculum training and fidelity support.
- **Evaluation.** Washington's plan: Conduct curriculum fidelity study; evaluation of family support model.
- **Comprehensive services.** Washington's plan: Increase access through shared services; tailor services to individual family need.
- **Evidence-based health and safety standards.** Washington's plan: Align health and safety standards for child care and preschool, link to Early Achievers.

Washington’s preschool expansion plan uses combined state and federal preschool funds to:

- Extend 4,000 current part-day ECEAP slots into full-day slots.
- With existing ECEAP slots, result in a total of 24,091 high quality preschool slots annually, including 19,946 full-day slots by 2018-19.

95% of new federal funds will be spent on the expansion and improvement activities above. The remaining 5% of new federal funds will be targeted on quality improvement and infrastructure activities, including:

- Statewide implementation of evidence-based curriculum training and fidelity supports.
- New professional development for preschool coaches to enhance the overall statewide capacity to providing ongoing evidence-based support to preschool teachers and classrooms.
- Expansion of the P-3 Leadership Institute, increasing opportunities for local teams of early learning and K-12 administrators to advance their skill and expertise in supporting strong P-3 systems and alignment in local communities.

Existing state, federal and matching funds will support these additional quality improvements:

- Create new BA pathways so more preschool teachers can attain BA degrees in early childhood. This includes an innovative approach in which colleges and universities share “core coursework” that is integrated into each institution’s degree requirements, leading to online and in-person BA degrees being available at community colleges and universities.
- Provide enhanced professional development opportunities that increase preschool program capacity to serve children who may need additional supports, including children with special needs and those who are dual language learners.

Washington’s plan includes partnering with 47 existing preschool contractors that are school districts, educational service districts, community colleges, non-profit organizations and child care programs, as well as developing new preschool capacity.

Proposed outcomes by end of grant	
# children served	Child outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 18,000 total high-quality preschool slots • 54% of eligible children (<200%FPL) participating 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 90% of preschool graduates ready in each of the six domains measured in WaKIDS • 80% of preschool graduates will exit at age expectations for all six domains

How partners informed the application

DEL is committed to expanding preschool in partnership with communities and providers. We reached out to key partners and stakeholders throughout the grant-writing process, including:

- Webinars and a web page with information about the application process.
- Individual conversations with key legislative leaders.
- Meetings with early learning stakeholders and advocates.
- Conversation with the state Early Learning Advisory Council.
- Application review process by readers from more than a dozen partner organizations including OSPI, Child Care Aware, Thrive by Five Washington, the Washington State Association of Head Start and ECEAP, advocates and several current ECEAP contractors.

Partner feedback helped strengthen both the application and emerging implementation plans.

Why Washington is well-positioned to expand preschool

- **Strong leadership.** Washington has a Governor’s cabinet-level early learning agency, which is the home to the state’s key early programs and services, including: state preschool, child care licensing, home visiting, the Head Start State Collaboration Office, Early Support for Infants and Toddlers (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Part C), and child care subsidy policy.
- **Statutory entitlement.** The Legislature has made voluntary preschool a statutory entitlement for 3- and 4-year-olds from families with incomes at or below 110% FPL (and those with certain other developmental needs) by school year 2018-19. (**House Bill 2731**)
- **Washington Preschool Plan.** The Legislature in 2011 directed DEL and the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction convened a group of stakeholders and advocates to create **a comprehensive plan** for an expanded voluntary statewide preschool program. The plan calls for expanded preschool services that build upon the current ECEAP program, with increased intensity (more full day services) and increased access for more children. (**Senate Bill 6759**)
- **Strong structural support.** Thanks to RTT-ELC and other state and federal investments, Washington has a strong system to support preschool expansion, including Early Achievers, a comprehensive kindergarten entry assessment (WaKIDS), aligned program standards, the state Early Learning and Development Guidelines, and strong support from, and collaboration with, programs and partners in the birth through third grade continuum.

What’s next

Washington intends to move forward with quality improvements of our preschool program. Winning the federal grant would help get us there faster.

Many programs began offering full-day preschool this school year. These programs serve on the Preschool Operational Work Group and are providing valuable feedback to DEL on scaling the work. In addition, DEL will be convening small advisory teams to discuss the implementation of additional preschool quality enhancements, such as increasing the number of teachers with BA degrees and expanding coaching resources.

Washington preschool fast facts

In the 2014-15 school year, there are 10,091 state-funded preschool slots:

- 8,165 part-day slots (averaging 2.5 hours per day)
- 1,354 full school day slots (averaging 6 hours per day)
- 572 extended-day slots (10 hours or more)

ECEAP children in the 2013-14 school year:

- 81% were 4-year-olds
- 65% were at or below 80% federal poverty level (\$23,550 annually for a family of four)
- 28% spoke Spanish as their home language; 6.5% spoke another home language other than English
- 39% had a parent with less than a high school education
- 9.6% had an individualized education plan under federal law

New enrollment slots in the 2014-15 school year

