

Maryland State Department of Education
Aid to Education
FY 2024 Operating Budget
Response to the Department of Legislative Services Analysis

House Education & Economic Development Subcommittee –
February 23, 2023

Senate Education, Business & Administration Subcommittee –
February 24, 2023



Mohammed Choudhury
State Superintendent of Schools

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) welcomes this opportunity to address questions raised by the analyst.

Operating Budget Analysis

Fiscal 2023

Proposed Deficiencies

The Aid to Education budget receives a total of \$4.6 million in fiscal 2023 deficiency appropriations. Pathways in Technology Education Early College High School (P-TECH) receives \$115,136 in general funds to ensure adequate funding for enrollment. National Board Certification (NBC) exam fees and support under Teacher Development receives \$4,487,610 in Blueprint and NBC special funds.

The Department of Legislative Services (DLS) recommends that MSDE continue to submit a report on the P-TECH program detailing enrollment and projected costs.

MSDE Response:

MSDE concurs and notes the following information on this program. The P-Tech program is currently in its sixth year with programs in 12 high schools across six jurisdictions. The first cohort of students will graduate in spring 2023 with a High School Diploma and an Associate Degree. Therefore, the Department does not yet have the outcome data necessary to evaluate the impact of the program. The Department notes the Blueprint for Maryland's Future's requirement that 45% of high school students complete an apprenticeship and graduate with an industry credential. If the State is going to reach this goal, a shift in focus to supporting and expanding apprenticeships and related pathways is necessary.

Changes in the Aid to Education Budget

Maryland Educator Shortage Act of 2023

The fiscal 2024 allowance provides a contingent appropriation in Innovative Programs of \$15.0 million in general funds for the Maryland Educator Shortage Act of 2023 (HB 1219/SB 893) to enhance teacher recruitment and retention. This legislation transfers administration of the Teaching Fellows for Maryland program to MSDE and requires the agency to establish goals for the recruitment and retention of Maryland teachers as well as create two programs: the Grow Our Own Educators Scholarship Program and Fund to provide scholarships to individuals who pledge to work full time as a teacher in the State; and the Educator Internship Stipend Program.

MSDE should comment on this bill and how it will address issues of teacher recruitment and retention.

MSDE Response:

Maryland's educator workforce is at a crossroads. 10% of Maryland's public-school teachers turn over each year, more than 5,500 in 2022. Meanwhile, the pipeline of educators to fill those positions

is insufficient to fill vacancies each year.¹ Only bold, transformational action can reverse course and ensure that Maryland’s public schools have the diverse, high-quality teaching professionals necessary to implement a world-class education system for Maryland’s children and families.

The Blueprint for Maryland’s Future sets necessary high expectations for the establishment of a career ladder and investment in the professionalization of Maryland’s teachers. The Educator Shortage Act serves the goals of the Blueprint by enshrining in State law the infrastructure necessary to achieve a permanent, sustainable pathway to a diverse teaching workforce ready to meet the demands of the world-class education system the Blueprint demands. The Educator Shortage Act is a plan to:

1. create permanent pathways to employment that attend to long-standing teacher vacancies; and
2. diversify the pipeline of future educators; and
3. address Maryland’s ability to import high-quality teachers from out of state; and
4. reduce structural barriers to credential attainment for early childhood education providers as the State seeks to rapidly expand public and private delivery options of State-approved pre-kindergarten programs.

Recruiting and retaining a pipeline of high-quality educators requires a State commitment. MSDE led this work through the establishment of Grow-Your-Own-Programs in 23 of Maryland’s 24 local education agencies (LEAs) in collaboration with Institutions of Higher Education across the State as part of the MSDE-developed Maryland Leads initiatives (you can view more about this United States Department of Education-recognized American Rescue Plan State set-aside/discretionary program in the attached guidance, included with this written testimony). This bill codifies this work and sustains LEA efforts that began in earnest during the pandemic. MSDE-approved grow-your-own educator programs would allow local education agency employees – individuals already committed to Maryland’s children and families – to earn an income while they learn and obtain a degree and/or related teaching credential. These employees may, for example, be current, Education Support Professionals (ESPs) or career changers with conditional certifications. The GYO educator fund and program established in the Educator Shortage Act, as drafted, also then provides annual support for participating LEA employees through the GYO program established in the bill.

Further, currently, more than half of Maryland’s teachers come from out of state. The Educator Shortage Act works to build a pipeline of teachers in Maryland but the State will continue to rely on workforce development by allowing (and encouraging) teachers from other states to come to Maryland and teach. The Educator Shortage Act establishes a new Subtitle in the Education Article, 6-128, that allows Maryland to participate in an inter-state compact. This compact would ensure that Maryland could reduce the barriers for transferring professional teaching licenses for credentialed teachers from States with rigorous credentialing requirements.

¹ To learn more about teacher workforce and supply data in Maryland, view the full Maryland’s Teacher Workforce: Supply, Demand, and Diversity July 26, 2022 State Board of Education presentation at: <https://marylandpublicschools.org/stateboard/Documents/2022/0726/TabGBlueprintAndDataDeepDiveTeacherPipelineAndDiversity.pdf>

Lastly, the updates in the bill allow for *prior learning experience* pathways to a bachelor’s equivalent credential in approved alternative preparation programs as well as the expansion of eligible sites in which an individual may intern for early childhood education certification. This language eases unintended but impactful Blueprint language that, in effect, forces existing providers to close their centers in order to be able to seek and obtain the credentials necessary to eventually offer a State-approved pre-kindergarten option. The Maryland Rebuilds program, a Department-developed program that utilizes State discretionary funds from American Rescue Plan child care resources, calls for the creation of *prior learning experience* pathways to help address this issue. The “Growing a Highly Effective Child Care Workforce” strategy of the Maryland Rebuilds program and program grantee Montgomery College will soon pilot a first-of-its-kind in Maryland *prior learning experience* pathway for child care workers (the full program guidance is attached, for reference). The bill codifies programs MSDE has jumpstarted through its one-time pandemic resources. Given the Blueprint’s expectations regarding a true, mixed-delivery pre-kindergarten system, this language is essential in giving private providers a chance to step forward and meet the goals of the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future.

Issues

1. Final State-aid Submission Delayed; Adjustments Underway

Net Taxable Income Adjustment in Process

The Comptroller of Maryland annually produces a report that provides the NTI data referenced previously for the calculation of several State aid formulas; the report was released in early December 2022. However, delays in processing tax returns led the Comptroller to issue a revised report in January 2023 showing 20% increases in county tax revenues rather than the 8.5% increase shown in the earlier report. Using the updated information results in a slight change in State aid for LEAs, which will likely be resolved in a supplemental budget.

Collection of Enrollment Data May Need Attention

Two recent audits by the Office of Legislative Audits and the Office of the Inspector General for Education documented inconsistencies in the enrollment and attendance counts for LEAs, as well as issues with MSDE oversight and audit of these enrollment counts. Counting enrollment accurately is complicated, especially with recent changes to the law for Blueprint program implementation. For example, § 5-222 of the Education Article requires MSDE to count FRPM students in the prior fiscal year by school to determine a final “greater than” count for compensatory education enrollment. This process requires school-level FRPM counts in all LEAs including districts that qualify for the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP), which is different than the federal requirements for counting students in CEP schools. DLS’ review of initial, school-level FRPM enrollment data submitted by MSDE indicated that school-level counts for CPG did not always match LEA aggregate counts and that MSDE may not have collected the necessary data to apply the “greater than” calculation for the compensatory education funding.

With these concerns in mind, DLS recommends the addition of restrictive language directing MSDE to report on how the agency and LEAs conduct school-level FRPM enrollment counts.

MSDE Response:

MSDE respectfully disagrees with the Analyst's recommendation to restrict funds for the Department.

The Blueprint for Maryland's Future requires MSDE to provide DBM and DLS the data elements necessary to calculate the major education aid programs by December 1 each year. State and federal regulations require local education agencies (LEAs) to report official student enrollment as of 9/30, English learners and students with disabilities as of 10/1, and students eligible for free or reduced price meals as of 10/31 each year. MSDE provides guidance and technical assistance to LEAs to support these data submissions. The Department has less than 60 calendar days to receive, review, and evaluate the data provided by the LEAs. For the free and reduced-price meal data, the Department has less than 30 calendar days. COMAR requires submission of transportation data by November 30 leaving MSDE just twenty-four hours. All of this assumes that local data are clean and accurate right away and, unfortunately, that is not the case. This year, upon receipt of MSDE data, MSDE had to clean LEA data files. Multiple LEAs then submitted subsequent data that overrode and updated their initial submissions due to problems and inaccuracies in first-reported LEA data. MSDE would welcome the opportunity to discuss with the Department of Budget and Management, the General Assembly, and the Department of Legislative Services a timeline that better fits the necessary State budget timeline but that results in more accurate, reliable data in the initial, preliminary draft State aid calculations rather than the necessary up and down that occurs now while local education agencies and MSDE work swiftly to validate, correct, and forward updated data. The Department's guidance and reporting form are included in Appendix A.

Concentration of Poverty and Local Maintenance of Effort Calculations

Related to the issue on enrollment, § 5-223 of the Education Article requires school-level FRPM enrollment counts from the second prior fiscal year to determine eligibility for CPG per pupil grants. However, school-level enrollment counts for fiscal 2021 and 2022, which are necessary to calculate the three-year average CPG grant for fiscal 2024, were repeated in MSDE's data submissions to date.

Additionally, starting in fiscal 2023, MSDE must calculate an LEA's MOE as part of State aid calculations related to Chapter 36 implementation prior to the start of the fiscal year. MSDE is responsible for these preliminary calculations as well as collecting the data that determines MOE for each LEA. In December, prior to the start of session, MOE certifications are processed and shared with DLS for the upcoming fiscal year. However, MSDE has not yet submitted these data to DLS.

MSDE should comment on the delay in fiscal 2024 final calculations for CPG and MOE.

MSDE Response:

First, MSDE disagrees with the factual accuracy of this statement. MSDE, by law, submits data to DBM and DLS to calculate State aid. DLS has the data necessary to calculate State aid and MOE and can do so at any time once they have the data.

For additional context, the MOE formula in law has changed in each of the last two fiscal years, most recently with House Bill 1450 of 2022 (Chapter 33). MSDE received clarification from DBM and DLS on CPG calculation phase in late January 2023 and proceeded to include the recommended formula update into the calculation prior to update the preliminary draft FY 2024 calculations. Through it all, MSDE has retained open communication with the Assembly through DLS to ensure DLS is aware of updates and changes. MSDE anticipates that there may be additional updates next year given new aspects of the formula that phase-in for the first time in FY 2025 (pre-kindergarten Tier II sliding scales and approved local education agency career ladder plans). MSDE is committed to implementing formulas as intended and will continue to work openly and collaboratively with DBM and DLS to ensure proper rollout as all three agencies learn and grapple with the Blueprint formula phase in and related annual changes each year.

2. National and State Assessments Document Student Learning Loss

Learning loss is a well-documented phenomena usually associated with the loss in academic skills some students experience between school years due to summer break. During the COVID-19 pandemic, learning loss also became associated with the learning gaps related to school closures, loss of instructional time, and inability of states to administer formative and summative assessments of student academic progress. This type of learning loss is sometimes called “Covid slide.”

Analysis of PARCC and MCAP scores show a similar pattern. Comparing only students in grades 4 and 8 who scored proficient or distinguished on MCAP assessments to students who met or exceeded expectations on the PARCC assessments, from spring 2019 to 2022, grade 4 ELA proficiency scores increased slightly, from 43.6% to 46.3%; however, grade 4 math, grade 8 ELA, and grade 8 math all decreased, with grade 8 math scores particularly low, 12.5% and 6.9%, respectively, on the PARCC and MCAP assessments.

These data suggest that documenting learning loss accurately is an important issue that needs sustained attention. In calendar 2022, MSDE provided similar data in presentations to the State Board of Education, tracking learning loss across subjects, grade levels, and special groups such as LEP and special education students. MSDE also submitted committee narrative in calendar 2022 on certification of MCAP assessments and their cost, as well as a timetable for new MCAP assessments in social studies and science.

DLS recommends the continued submission of a report on MCAP administration, costs, as well as data on student learning loss.

MSDE Response:

MSDE concurs.

4. Costs Increase with Slots Added to Autism Waiver Program

In fiscal 2023, the Autism Waiver program received \$30.0 million in Supplemental Budget No. 5 as part of legislatively directed initiatives funded in the DPA. This additional funding was intended to

move approximately 1,500 individuals off the autism waiver registry, which currently has over 6,000 individuals. According to the 2022 *Joint Chairmen's Report* (JCR) on this program, MSDE reported that due to the time needed to process federal approvals for these slots through the Home- and Community-based Services waiver, the agency expects to add 1,500 slots in fiscal 2024. With this shift in the timeframe for onboarding individuals for this program, funding provided in fiscal 2023 will be allocated in fiscal 2024 and 2025.

The fiscal 2024 proposed budget reflects a \$10.0 million decrease in funding for the Autism Waiver program as no DPA funds are included in the allowance. Although not budgeted, MSDE plans to apply approximately \$25.7 million of the DPA funding to the program in fiscal 2024. After fiscal 2024, with the addition of 100 slots per year and anticipated increases in the cost per student per year, in fiscal 2025, the program is projected to cost \$60.9 million for 2,855 slots, with \$4.3 million applied from the remaining DPA funds. MSDE expects all individuals on the waitlist will receive services in fiscal 2027 at a projected cost of \$70.4 million.

As part of this JCR request, MSDE was asked to comment on the process by which individuals are identified for services and reasons for the high number of individuals on the registry. In their response, MSDE noted that in the past, the autism waiver operated as a registry, not a waitlist, with a first-come, first-served approach, and evaluation of individuals as a slot became available. With new requirements passed in Chapter 464 of 2022, MSDE and the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) are transitioning the registry to a waitlist of eligible individuals. This transition is expected to be completed in March 2023.

Due to the ongoing changes to the Autism Waiver program, DLS recommends that MSDE continue to submit a report on this program.

MSDE Response:

MSDE concurs and provides the following context.

The Autism Waiver is a partnership between MSDE and MDH. MSDE is responsible for the day-to-day implementation of the Autism Waiver **program**, serving as the Operating State Agency per the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. The MDH Office of Long Term Services and Supports, Division of Community Long Term Care is responsible for the administrative oversight of the Autism Waiver, and the operation of the Autism Waiver **registry**, serving as the single State Medicaid Agency (SMA) per the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. As the SMA, MDH contracts with CMD Outsourcing Solutions to operate and maintain the Autism Waiver **registry**.

Improvements have been made to the maintenance of the Autism Waiver registry, but the overall enrollment process has remained the same since the inception of the Autism Waiver. MSDE and MDH are in the process of turning the Autism Waiver registry into a waitlist beginning in fiscal 2024, as required by [SB 636: Maryland Department of Health – Waiver Programs – Waitlist and Registry Reduction \(End the Wait Act\), Chapter 464 of 2022](#). Throughout this process, MSDE and MDH have worked collaboratively with the Autism Waiver Advisory Committee to examine Autism Waiver registry and eligibility procedures.

5. Nonpublic Placement Program Costs Increase in Fiscal 2024

As part of a 2022 JCR request, MSDE was required to submit a closeout report on nonpublic placements and the reimbursement schedule for nonpublic special education schools. This report noted that MSDE is moving forward with a new framework and procedures that should speed up the reconciliation process. To that end, in fiscal 2022, MSDE reported that final expenditures totaled \$126.1 million, which is \$1.2 million less than the final appropriation. This amount included additional funding for higher teacher salaries in nonpublic special education schools totaling \$3.6 million.

Per Chapter 700, in fiscal 2023 the Governor was required to use unexpended appropriations from fiscal 2020 and 2021 to fund an increase of 4% over the amount approved by MSDE in fiscal 2022 exclusively for classroom, related services, and general support positions, and an additional increase of not less than 2% or the Consumer Price Index (whichever is greater). The fiscal 2023 budget as introduced allocated \$132.1 million for nonpublic placements, but to meet Chapter 700 requirements, the Governor provided funds in Fiscal 2023 Supplemental Budgets No. 3 and No. 5 for this purpose, including \$4.0 million in funds for nonpublic special education teacher salaries increases and \$5.3 million for 4% provider rate increases, respectively. These allocations resulted in a final working appropriation for fiscal 2023 of \$141.4 million.

The provider rate allocation in fiscal 2023 raised the base budget for this program to \$137.4 million, which when compared to fiscal 2022 actuals, represents an 11% increase. In fiscal 2024, the proposed budget totals \$145.6 million, which is a \$4.2 million increase over the fiscal 2023 working appropriation.

Due to continued increases in funding, DLS recommends that MSDE continue to submit a closeout report for this program.

MSDE Response:

MSDE concurs.

Operating Budget Recommended Actions

1. Add the following language to the general fund appropriation:

provided that \$100,000 of this appropriation made for the purpose of the Maryland State Department of Education Office of the State Superintendent may not be expended until the agency submits to the budget committees a report by August 1, 2023, on the agency's enrollment collection procedures for free and reduced-price meal (FRPM) students for fiscal 2024 (2023-2024 school year). This report should include the following enrollment data by local education agency (LEA) and school:

(1) the number of free, reduced-price, and paid meal students;

(2) the number of FRPM students identified using direct certification and other eligible categories;

(3) greater than comparisons by LEA used to calculate compensatory education enrollment;

(4) Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) enrollment and collection procedures used for CEP schools and districts.

This report should also include procedures used to collect and audit LEA enrollment data to check for omissions, errors, or other irregularities, and if applicable, a description of changes to enrollment collection procedures for fiscal 2025.

The budget committees shall have 45 days to review and comment from the date of receipt of the report. Funds restricted pending the receipt of a report may not be transferred by budget amendment or otherwise to any other purpose and shall revert to the General Fund if the report is not submitted to the budget committees.

Explanation: The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) is responsible for accurate counts of FRPM students to determine student eligibility for FRPM benefits as well as funding of the compensatory education and concentration of poverty grant programs. Due to issues involving enrollment counts in recent audits and submitted fiscal 2024 data, this language directs MSDE to submit a report regarding actions the agency is taking to resolve these findings.

Information Request	Author	Due Date
Report on FRPM enrollment	MSDE	August 1, 2023

MSDE Response:

MSDE respectfully disagrees for the reasons noted on page 2 of this response.

2. Adopt the following narrative:

Report on the Nonpublic Placement Program: The budget committees are concerned about accelerating costs for the Nonpublic Placement program, the timely reimbursement of Nonpublic Placement providers, and actions taken by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) to rectify these issues. The budget committees request that MSDE submit a report by October 1, 2023, with (1) program closeout data for fiscal 2023 by provider including annual reimbursement costs and documentation on potential remaining discrepancies at the end of the fiscal year and (2) actions taken in fiscal 2022 and 2023 by the agency to reimburse nonpublic placement providers in a timelier manner.

Information Request	Author	Due Date
Report on the nonpublic placement program	MSDE	October 1, 2023

MSDE Response:

MSDE concurs.

3. Adopt the following narrative:

Status Update on the Pathways in Technology Early College High School Program (P-TECH): The budget committees are concerned about increasing costs for the P-TECH program, which is managed by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) and local education agencies (LEA). Costs for the P-TECH program are determined by a variety of factors including student enrollment in community college courses and the costs for those courses in any given year. The budget committees request that MSDE submit a status update on the P-TECH program by August 1, 2023, that provides the following information regarding this issue:

- current enrollment in all P-TECH programs by high school, community college, cohort, and entry year;
- projected enrollment in all P-TECH programs in the 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 school years;
- the total number of students who left the program in any given year and reasons for departure;
- the total number of students who have graduated by program and the percentage completion rate;
- community college courses attended by P-TECH students with a cost per course per semester;

current cost for the program in fiscal 2024 and total projected cost for the program in fiscal 2025;

- projected average cost by student, program, and LEA for fiscal 2024 and 2025, including supplemental school and college grants by institution and LEA.

Information Request
Status update on P-TECH

Author
MSDE

Due Date
August 1, 2023

MSDE Response:

MSDE concurs.

4. Adopt the following narrative:

Status Report on the Maryland Comprehensive Assessment Program (MCAP): The committees are concerned by disruptions to learning and learning loss due to the COVID-19 pandemic and increased costs for new MCAP assessment development in the next few years. The committees request that by November 1, 2023, the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) submit a status update on MCAP assessments and expenditures including, but not limited to:

- a timetable for MCAP administration for all assessments for school year 2023-2024 and 2024-2025, including field testing and pilots for new assessments;
- details on MCAP measurement of student learning loss in school year 2022-2023 by local education agency (LEA), subject area, grade level, and assessment, as well as additional steps taken, if any, by MSDE at the State level to measure student learning loss;
- details on MCAP administration in school year 2022-2023 for virtual school students by LEA, program, grade level, and assessment, including alternative assessments and Kindergarten Readiness and anticipated changes, if any, to assessments for virtual school students in school year 2023-2024 and 2024-2025;
- expenditures in fiscal 2023 and 2024 and anticipated allowances for fiscal 2025, for each MCAP assessment and assessments under development; and
- contractual expenditures by vendor for fiscal 2023 and 2024 and anticipated contractual expenditures in fiscal 2025, for costs associated with assessment development and administration.

Information Request
Status report on MCAP

Author
MSDE

Due Date
November 1, 2023

MSDE Response:
MSDE concurs.



Mohammed Choudhury
State Superintendent of Schools

October 15, 2021

Local School Finance Officials:

This correspondence provides information and guidance regarding the annual State Compensatory Education (SCE) grant data collection. The form (Free and Reduced-Price Meal Eligibility for Fiscal Year 2023 State Aid Calculations) for this process is attached. Please return it to the attention of Justin Dayhoff, at justin.dayhoff@maryland.gov, by not later than **Friday, November 5, 2021**. Earlier submission is encouraged, if possible.

The process has changed from previous years due to the requirements of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. In prior years, MSDE collected Free or Reduced-Price meal data at the Local Education Agency level. The Blueprint now requires MSDE to use and report the percentage and number of students who are eligible for Free or Reduced-Price Meals at the school level. As a result, MSDE revised the data collection process to include school-level student counts.

In the attached form, local school systems are required to report, by school, the number of students eligible for Free or Reduced-Price meals based on the October 31, 2021, count of eligible students, disaggregated by direct certification, USDA applications, Alternative Forms (CEP), and the total. The school-level student count should exclude Prekindergarten students, non K-12 counts, and students disallowed as a result of the USDA verification process. The completed forms are due to MSDE by Friday, November 5, 2021.

The form is being provided in EXCEL format to assist with the necessary calculations. Please print a copy of the completed form, obtain the necessary signature in blue ink, and scan and submit via email both the scanned version of the first page and the Excel file; **please resave the file including the name of your LEA in the filename.**

USDA Verification Process

Given the level of funding impacted by the SCE grants, it is incumbent for MSDE to ensure the integrity of data used in the calculation process. The system relies on annual verification process required in the National School Lunch Program by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). The verification process identifies students who are ineligible to receive free or reduced-price meals and, therefore, also ineligible to be included in SCE funding. MSDE reserves the right to apply audit testing and other audit procedures as deemed necessary to confirm these counts.

Instructions

Include the official school ID number and name of each school in the school system. Input the total number of students eligible for free and reduced-price meals as of October 31, 2021, by column: direct certification, application, or alternative form. These data should reflect the total number from the official October 31 Report prepared by the MSDE Office of School and Community Nutrition reflecting the eligible students for the sites listed.

Local Finance Officials
Page Two
October 15, 2021

Community Eligibility Provision

For school systems with one or more of their schools participating in the USDA Community Eligibility Provision (CEP), input the number of actual students eligible through direct certification in Column C and the actual number of students eligible based on alternative forms in Column E. Since school systems participating in CEP do not collect applications, Column D should be zero.

MSDE will review this revised data collection process during the regularly scheduled School Finance Officials call on Tuesday, October 20, 2021. MSDE staff will also be available to provide technical assistance as needed. If you have questions regarding this data collection, please feel free to contact me. I can be reached at justin.dayhoff@maryland.gov.

Sincerely,



Justin Dayhoff, Assistant State Superintendent
Financial Planning, Operations, and Strategy

Enclosure

Maryland State Department of Education

Free and Reduced-Price Meal Eligibility for Fiscal Year 2024 State Aid Calculations

The number of students eligible for free or reduced-price meals based on the October 31, 2022 count.

[Submit this form electronically to MSDE via justin.dayhoff@maryland.gov on or by November 30th, 2022.](mailto:justin.dayhoff@maryland.gov)

MSDE School Number	School Name	Total Enroll	PreK	K-12 Students Eligible for Free and Reduced Prices Meals *								CEP %	
				FREE	REDUCED	PAID	Total Direct Certification	Medicaid		USDA Applications	Alternative Forms		CEP School
								Free	Reduced				
							-	-					
							-	-					
							-	-					
							-	-					
							-	-					
(unhide rows above as necessary)							-	-					
School System Total		-		-	-	-	-			-		-	

* Do not include Prekindergarten students, other non-K-12 counts, or students disallowed as a result of the verification process

I certify that the number of enrolled students presented above, determined eligible for free or reduced-price meals as of October 31, 2022, is accurate. These data will be used in the calculations of the Compensatory Education formula.

Local Educational Agency

Signature of Superintendent

Date



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

Mohammed Choudhury

State Superintendent of Schools
Secretary-Treasurer, Maryland State Board of Education

Deann M. Collins, Ed D.

Deputy Superintendent, Teaching and Learning

Steven Hicks

Assistant State Superintendent, Division of Early Childhood

Larry Hogan

Governor

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Merin Thomas (Student Member)

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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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mohammed Choudhury', written in a cursive style.

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:
 - Increased participation in the Child Care Scholarship program, with special attention to underrepresented children and underserved regions in Maryland;
 - 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;
 - 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;
 - Providing families with tools and support as they go through the process of determining eligibility and applying for a Child Care Scholarship;
 - 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;
 - Providing resources to families to children who have a developmental delay or disability, or a special need; and
 - 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:
 - 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;
 - 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;
 - Connecting providers to resources such as the Maryland Accreditation Support Fund and Maryland EXCELS Quality Assurance Specialists;
 - Providing technical assistance to providers to complete forms and required documents for participation in the Maryland EXCELS program; and
 - Providing support and technical assistance to child care providers whose primary language is not English.

Inspiration from the Field

<p>› Strategies to Build Effective Kinship Navigator Programs</p> <p><i>Child Trends</i></p>	<p>› A Closer Look at Latino Access to Child Care Subsidies</p> <p><i>CLASP</i></p>	<p>› Kentucky's Child Care Resource and Referral Network</p> <p><i>ChildCare Aware of Kentucky</i></p>
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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.);

- Train and support other providers/programs to identify potential partners in their area;
- Host or provide professional learning opportunities that help other child care providers/programs understand the benefits that strategic partnerships can yield;
- 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;
- Share data that demonstrates improvement in learning for student groups; and
- 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:
 - 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
 - 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:
 - Curriculum that is inclusive of students who have a development delay, disability, or sensory impairment;
 - A plan to train a cohort of providers, educators and support staff working in underserved regions across Maryland to pilot the curriculum; and
 - 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.

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:
 - 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;
 - Training and professional learning opportunities on how to maintain your license, as well as opportunities for growth (earning Maryland EXCELS and National Accreditation);
 - Disseminating information on fee support programs such as the Accreditation Support Fund;
 - Creating asynchronous and synchronous learning opportunities for family child care providers to share experiences, including through peer to peer networks,; and
 - 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:
 - Reduced or shared costs and time through joint purchasing, staff sharing, collaborative contracts, centralized administration, or some combination of this;
 - Shared program or administrative capacity-building using common tools and systems, shared mentoring and supervision, training, and collaborative improvement processes; and
 - 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



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

Mohammed Choudhury

State Superintendent of Schools
Secretary-Treasurer, Maryland State Board of Education

Deann M. Collins, Ed D.

Deputy Superintendent, Teaching and Learning

Steven Hicks

Assistant State Superintendent, Division of Early Childhood

Larry Hogan

Governor

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Holly C. Wilcox, Ph.D.

Merin Thomas (Student Member)

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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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mohammed Choudhury', written in a cursive style.

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:
 - Increased participation in the Child Care Scholarship program, with special attention to underrepresented children and underserved regions in Maryland;
 - 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;
 - 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;
 - Providing families with tools and support as they go through the process of determining eligibility and applying for a Child Care Scholarship;
 - 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;
 - Providing resources to families to children who have a developmental delay or disability, or a special need; and
 - 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:
 - 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;
 - 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;
 - Connecting providers to resources such as the Maryland Accreditation Support Fund and Maryland EXCELS Quality Assurance Specialists;
 - Providing technical assistance to providers to complete forms and required documents for participation in the Maryland EXCELS program; and
 - Providing support and technical assistance to child care providers whose primary language is not English.

Inspiration from the Field

<p>› Strategies to Build Effective Kinship Navigator Programs</p> <p><i>Child Trends</i></p>	<p>› A Closer Look at Latino Access to Child Care Subsidies</p> <p><i>CLASP</i></p>	<p>› Kentucky's Child Care Resource and Referral Network</p> <p><i>ChildCare Aware of Kentucky</i></p>
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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.);
- Train and support other providers/programs to identify potential partners in their area;
 - Host or provide professional learning opportunities that help other child care providers/programs understand the benefits that strategic partnerships can yield;
 - 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;
 - Share data that demonstrates improvement in learning for student groups; and
 - 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:
 - 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
 - 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:
 - Curriculum that is inclusive of students who have a development delay, disability, or sensory impairment;
 - A plan to train a cohort of providers, educators and support staff working in underserved regions across Maryland to pilot the curriculum; and
 - 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.

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:
 - 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;
 - Training and professional learning opportunities on how to maintain your license, as well as opportunities for growth (earning Maryland EXCELS and National Accreditation);
 - Disseminating information on fee support programs such as the Accreditation Support Fund;
 - Creating asynchronous and synchronous learning opportunities for family child care providers to share experiences, including through peer to peer networks,; and
 - 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:
 - Reduced or shared costs and time through joint purchasing, staff sharing, collaborative contracts, centralized administration, or some combination of this;
 - Shared program or administrative capacity-building using common tools and systems, shared mentoring and supervision, training, and collaborative improvement processes; and
 - 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