

# Early Childhood Education Grant Procedures Guide

## Section I Grant Information

### A. Background

The Early Childhood Education Grant program was established by the 2015 64<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly and codified in [NDCC Chapter 15.1-37-01](#) to assist North Dakota's communities with public, private, nonprofit or partnership entities offering early childhood education.

### B. Grants Administration

The Early Childhood Education Grant (ECEG) program is administered by the Workforce Development Division of the Department of Commerce in collaboration with the Department of Public Instruction and Department of Human Services, Early Childhood Services. References to 'the Division' throughout the guide mean the Department of Commerce, Workforce Development Division. References to 'DPI' mean the Department of Public Instruction. References to 'DHS' mean the Department of Human Services, Early Childhood Services.

### C. Grant Application and Award Schedule

The Division will award ECEG grants in accordance with criteria aligned with the expectations set forth in statute. Grants awarded beginning July 1, 2019. If the amount appropriated to the ECEG program is insufficient to provide grants to all eligible providers who submit a completed application. Grants will be awarded on a chronological basis in accordance with the date on which a completed application is received. Eligible providers will be put on a waiting list, and be considered if funds become available. The grant application is **Attachment III** of this program guidance.

Submit grant applications to Kerri Kraft via email at [kkraft@nd.gov](mailto:kkraft@nd.gov). For inquiries please email or phone (701-328-7263). For inquiries to the Department of Public Instruction, please contact Tara Fuhrer [trfuhrer@nd.gov](mailto:trfuhrer@nd.gov) or phone (701-328-4646).

Submit grant applications via email, the date stamp on the email will serve as the date of submittal. Applications submitted via postal service, must be post marked on or by June 1<sup>st</sup> to be considered.

The Division will have 30 days to review grant applications, request and receipt of clarification, or accept additional information and make award determinations.

#### 2019-2021 Biennium Timeline

#### **By June 1, 2019 of each grant year: Early Childhood Education Coalition meeting**

As a new grantee, the superintendent of a school district shall call an early childhood education coalition meeting within the school district to meet to discuss the requirements to apply for the grant to discuss the following:

- a. Identify all available options for cost-effectively providing early childhood education services within the district;
- b. Coordinate utilization of facilities, personnel and transportation;
- c. Form a coalition of early childhood education service providers; and

- d. Select a coalition governing board.

As a previously funded grantee, by **September 1**, of each grant year, the early childhood education coalition governing board shall call an early childhood education coalition meeting to meet to discuss the requirements of the grant and discuss the following:

- a. Identify all available options for cost-effectively providing early childhood education services within the district;
- b. Coordinate utilization of facilities, personnel and transportation;
- c. Form a coalition of early childhood education service providers

For a list of early childhood education partners in your community, visit North Dakota Child Care Aware at <http://ndchildcare.org/info/early-childhood-education-grants.html>

### **School Year Grant Timeline:**

**June 1, 2019: Application deadline – 2019-2020 School Year Grant**

**July 1, 2019: Awards announced – Letter of Agreement’s disbursed**

**September 1, 2019: Coalition meeting held and date documented in STARS – See Section VI, A on coalition reporting requirements**

**September 30, 2019: First quarter reimbursements due**

**December 31, 2019: Second quarter reimbursements due**

**March 30, 2020: Third quarter reimbursements due**

**June 1, 2020: Application deadline – 2020-2021 School Year Grant**

**May 31, 2020: Fourth (final) quarter reimbursements due**

**July 1, 2020: Awards announced – Letter of Agreement’s disbursed**

**September 1, 2020: Coalition meeting held and date documented in STARS – See Section VI, A on coalition reporting requirements**

**September 30, 2020: First quarter reimbursements due**

**December 31, 2020: Second quarter reimbursements due**

**March 30, 2021: Third quarter reimbursements due**

**May 31, 2021: Fourth (final) quarter reimbursements due**

### **Award Determination**

The Division will make award determinations with assistance from NDDPI and NDDHS.

### **Appeals**

Please contact the North Dakota Department of Commerce Commissioner to appeal award determinations.

### **D: Eligibility**

Eligible public and private early childhood education providers in the state who:

- a. Are a participating member in the local coalition or on the governing board;
- b. Operates an early childhood education program that:
  - Is approved by NDDPI in accordance with NDCC Chapter 15.1-37-01; and
  - Incorporates within its curriculum at least ten hours of research-based parental involvement.
  - Has documented willingness to admit children of all learning abilities into the early childhood education program.

## **E: Allowable Use of Funds**

NDCC Chapter 15.1-37-06 states:

The department of commerce shall receive applications for and distribute grants under this section to eligible members, including governing board members, of a consortium formed in accordance with section 15.1-37-05, in the amount of two thousand dollars for each child enrolled in a program of early childhood education, if the child is eligible for free lunches under the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act [42 U.S.C. 1751, et seq.] and one thousand dollars for each child enrolled in a program of early childhood education, if the child is eligible for reduced lunches under the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act [42 U.S.C. 1751, et seq.], provided (**Attachment I & II**):

- a. The child is a resident of this state;
- b. The child has reached four years of age before August first in the year of enrollment; and
- c. The program has a duration of at least four hundred hours over a period of at least thirty–two consecutive weeks.

A child enrolled in a federally funded head start program may not be counted for the purpose of determining grant eligibility under this section.

Once each calendar quarter, at the time and in the manner required by the department of commerce, any provider receiving a grant under this section shall forward to the parent of each child receiving services a notice indicating the total amount of the grant that was awarded to the provider for the quarter, the pro rata amount attributable to the parent's child, and the source of the grant. The department of commerce shall standardize the notification required by this subdivision.

If a provider fails to meet the notification requirements of this subsection, the department of commerce shall reduce the amount of the provider's next grant payment by fifty percent. If a provider fails to meet the notification requirements of this section a second time, the department of commerce shall determine that the provider is ineligible to participate in the grant program for a period of one year.

## **Section II Grant Applications**

Early Childhood Education Grant Application is available in **Attachment III** of this guidance. The Division will not accept incomplete applications; however, may be eligible for resubmittal.

When applying for ECEG grants, along with basic provider information, the provider must include the following:

1. NDDPI approval to offer Early Childhood Education services (of the current year or proof of intent to apply);
2. Verification of membership to the local coalition (by **Sept. 1**);
3. Verification of local school board participation in coalition governing board (by **Sept. 1**);
4. Projected number of four year olds to be served in upcoming school year that qualify for free and reduced lunches;
5. Projected number of all other four-year-olds to be served in the upcoming school year;

6. Program schedule to verify the program provides at least 400 hours of service over the duration of at least 32 weeks (as required by statute);
7. Verification the provider incorporates at least ten hours of research-based parental involvement (as required by statute);
8. Details on how the provider will use the funds;
9. Verification that the provider is aware they must notify the Division if enrollment numbers of four-year-olds the provider serves that qualify for free and reduced changes.

### **Section III Grant Award Determinations**

#### **A. Grant Application Award Determinations**

Applications will be reviewed by the Division, NDDPI and NDDHS to ensure they meet the requirements stated in NDCC Chapter 15.1-37-01.

If the amount appropriated is insufficient to provide grants to all eligible providers, the Division will award grants on a chronological basis in the order on which completed applications are received. Eligible providers will be put on a waiting list, and be considered if funds become available.

#### **B. Grant Award Process**

The Division will notify facilities of intent to award. **Attachment IV**

#### **C. Post Award Requirement**

Upon completion of the Letter of Agreement, a State Automated Reporting System (STARS) account is required for reporting during the duration of the award. Refer to <https://www.nd.gov/dpi/uploads/66/LoginID.pdf> for guidance on how to create the account. **Facility must contact NDDPI to finalize account setup. Contact Tara Fuhrer at 701-328-4646.**

#### **D. Payment Method**

Funds will be made available upon completion of the grant agreement or letter of agreement as follows: Upon submitting each quarterly report, the provider will receive \$500 per enrolled four-year-old eligible for free lunch and \$250 per enrolled four-year-old eligible for reduced lunch.

### **Section IV Grant Agreement and Reporting**

Upon approval of the grant application, the Division will develop a letter of agreement. The Division will work with the authorized agent to finalize agreement details.

#### **A. Reporting Requirements**

##### Local Coalition Report:

On or before the first quarterly reimbursement request for each grant year, the governing board of each local coalition must submit a coalition update report to the Division. The report is to include the following:

1. Name, contact information, and respective organization of all members of the governing board.
2. A list of all provider members of the local coalition.

3. Details on how the local coalition is working together to provide early childhood education services within the district. Examples include:
  - a. Identifying all available options for cost-effectively maximizing the availability of early childhood education services within the district.
  - b. Address coordinated utilization of facilities, personnel, and transportation for early childhood education within the district.

#### Quarterly Reimbursement Requests

On the last Friday of each calendar quarter, the providers must submit a quarterly reimbursement request to the Division, except the final quarter of the 2019-2021 biennium. The final quarterly reimbursement request must be submitted by June first of each grant year to allow the Division to process payments. The Quarterly Reimbursement Request Form is available in **Attachment V** of this guidance.

Due dates are as follows:

Year 1

September 27, 2019

December 27, 2019

March 27, 2020

May 31, 2020

Year 2

September 25, 2020

December 28, 2020 (following Monday, as the 25<sup>th</sup> is a holiday)

March 27, 2021

May 29, 2021

Quarterly Reimbursement Requests **must** include the following:

- a. The number of four year olds served at the facility that qualify for free lunch;
- b. The number of four year olds served at the facility that qualify for reduced lunch;
- c. The number of all other four year olds served.
- d. Verification the provider notified all parents of each child receiving services a notice indicating the total amount of the grant that was award to the provider for the quarter, the pro-rated amount to that child and the source of the grant. **NOTE:** The Division will provide the standard notification and is available in **Attachment VI** of this guidance. Failure to provide verification of this notice will reduce the providers next grant payment by 50%. Continued noncompliance will deem the provider ineligible to participate in the grant program for a period of one year.
- e. A brief narrative explaining use of funds.
- f. A PowerSchool report for the timeframe of the quarter indicating the student's date of birth, enrollment date, and lunch status, if PowerSchool software is utilized at the district receiving funds. PowerSchool Directions **Attachment VIII**.

Submit all reports via email to:

**Kerri Kraft**

Program Specialist

North Dakota Department of Commerce

[kkraft@nd.gov](mailto:kkraft@nd.gov)

## **B. Grant Agreement Modification**

The provider must contact the division in writing in the event of any enrollment increases or decreases which may change the agreed upon funding amount. If funds are available to support enrollment increases, both parties will sign a Letter of Agreement modification outlining the increased award amount.

## **C. Grant Closeout**

By June 15, 2020 year 1 and June 15, 2021 year 2, the Division will notify grantees of grant agreement closure. This notification will signify the end of the grant agreement and releases the administrator and the grantee from any further obligations under the grant agreement.

## **Section V Monitoring, Audits, and Records**

### Monitoring

The Division will monitor all grant recipients within the biennium. Monitoring includes review of all report submittals. Grantees must prepare a monitoring report and submit it to the Division Director within 60 days of a monitoring event. Grantees will receive a notification of monitoring results within 90 days of the monitoring event.

### Audit

Grantees are subject to audit. Grantees must keep financial records necessary to disclose the complete financial status of the grant.

### Open Records

Per [NDCC 44-04](#), grant records are subject to North Dakota open records laws. The Department of Commerce must disclose to the public upon request any records it receives from the Grantee. Under certain circumstances, any records obtained or generated by the Grantee under this grant may be open to the public upon request under the North Dakota open records law. Grantees must contact the Department of Commerce immediately upon receiving a request for information under the open records law and comply with the Grantor's instructions on how to respond to the request. Information on open records laws and Attorney General's guidance is available at <https://attorneygeneral.nd.gov/open-records-meetings>.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

- Attachment I – Application for Free and Reduced Lunch Template
- Attachment II – Free and Reduced Lunch Parental Letter Template
- Attachment III – SFN 60888, Early Childhood Education Grant Application
- Attachment IV – Standardized Letter of Agreement
- Attachment V – SFN 60889, Quarterly Reimbursement Request Form
- Attachment VI – Quarterly Parental Grant Notification Template
- Attachment VII – Frequently Asked Questions
- Attachment VIII – PowerSchool Reporting step by step

## **REFERENCES**

List of early childhood education partners in your community:  
<http://ndchildcare.org/info/early-childhood-education-grants.html>

STARS account information and creating account guidance: <https://www.nd.gov/dpi/uploads/66/LoginID.pdf>