

Head Start State Demonstration Program

The state demonstration program would include no more than 8 states for 5 federal fiscal years. According to House Majority staff, the states that may be eligible include OH, DE, CO, NY, NC, KY, GA, CT.

I. To be eligible, each state must:

- Have an existing State supported system providing early childhood education services to children prior to entry into kindergarten.
- Have implemented standards for school readiness that include standards for language, prereading and premathematics development for prekindergarten that are aligned with state kindergarten through twelfth grade academic content standards and shall apply to all programs receiving funds under this part or provides an assurance that such standards will be aligned by the end of the second fiscal year of participation.
- Have state and locally appropriated funds for pre-k services and Head start services in the fiscal year immediately preceding the fiscal year for which the state applies for the program not less than 50% of the federal funds the grantees in the state received for services to Head Start eligible children
- Have established a means for inter-agency coordination and collaboration in the development of the plan.

II. To operate, each state:

- Must submit a plan to the Secretary of HHS specifying:
 - The name of lead State agency designated by CEO of the State.
 - Whether it will be a statewide program or include only limited geographic areas.
 - The results of a State needs assessment, an assurance State will use the results to identify the needs for early childhood education services within a state or geographic area and is targeting services to those of greatest need and to expand and improve services to disadvantaged children.
 - An assurance of compliance:
 - To maintain priority for low-income children.
 - To include children with disabilities.
 - In identifying co-payments, federal share/local matching, administrative costs, and federal property interests.
 - In identifying any barriers to the effective use funds.
 - State Guidelines for School Readiness, including:
 - A State definition of school readiness.
 - A description of the State's goals for school readiness, including how the State intends to promote and maintain communication and collaboration between early care providers, education and LEAs, as well as to align early childhood and kindergarten curricula to ensure continuity and a successful transition to kindergarten.
 - An assurance the qualifications and credentials for early childhood teachers meet or exceed the standards under the Head Start Act.

- State Guidelines for ongoing Professional Development, including how the state intends to:
 - Improve competencies of early childhood educators.
 - Develop and implement initiatives to recruit and promote the retention of early childhood educators.
 - Encourage higher ed institutions, providers of community based training, and other programs, to prepare students to be early childhood ed professionals.
 - Improve the quality of professional development for pre-K teachers.
- Quality standards, including a/an:
 - Services required to be provided, including health, parental involvement, nutritional, social, transition activities, and other services.
 - Education standards to promote the school readiness of children participating.
 - Additional education standards to ensure children at a minimum develop and demonstrate: language skills; pre-reading knowledge and skills, including interest in and appreciation of books, reading and writing either alone or with other; pre-mathematical knowledge and skills; cognitive abilities related to academic achievement; social development important for environments constructive for child development, early learning and school success, and progress toward acquisition of the English language for LEP children.
 - State's minimum standards for early childhood teacher credentials and qualifications.
 - Student-teacher ratio for each age-group served.
 - Administrative and financial management standards
 - Standards relating to condition and location of facilities for Such agencies, programs and projects and other such standards as state deems appropriate.
- An accountability plan, to:
 - Ensure individual providers are achieving results in advancing the knowledge and behaviors identified by the State as prerequisites for effective kindergarten performance and measures the State will use to achieve results and effectiveness of the State program and individual providers.
- How accountability results will be publicized:
 - Results must be made public to areas served and the data included should be in aggregated form, without identifying individual children.
- A transition plan (initial plan should include a provision for transition from a direct Federal program to demo program).
- An assurance to cooperate with research activities.
- How states will meet Maintenance of Effort requirements, including:

Assurance of providing, as the Secretary requires, data concerning numbers of families and children Served in preschool and HS programs during the base year and each FY covered in the plan.

Assurance of providing resources for each FY for an amount at least equal to the total amount of resources contributed for the base year.

- How states will provide training and technical assistance activities that have a positive and lasting impact on classroom instruction.
- Approved, states may run all or any part of the program directly or by grant, contract or cooperative agreement.

III. For Consultation, Submission and Oversight of the State Plan and Demo Program

- States must assure the plan was developed with appropriate entities including:
 - Representatives of agencies responsible for administering early childhood education and are programs in the state, including Head Start providers, parents, SEAs, LEAs, early childhood education professionals, kindergarten teachers, and teachers in grades 1-4, child welfare agencies, child care resource and referral agencies, child care providers, and
 - Other interested parties, including: health care professionals, agency managing WIC program, institutions of higher ed, community-based and faith-based organizations, business community, state legislators and local officials, museums and libraries, other relevant state entities and agencies that provide resources for young children.
- States submit the plan to the Secretary of HHS in consultation with the Secretary of Education and shall be considered approved unless the Secretary makes a written determination within a “reasonable time” from the date the application was received.
- The Secretary retains authority for oversight through the review of records, reports, audits, onsite inspection of records and facilities and monitoring of program activities and operations.
- If the Secretary determines a state fails to meet the requirements, states will be notified of deficiencies and require corrective action, including
 - Requiring a state to correct the deficiency within 90 days of notification or to implement a quality improvement plan designed to correct the deficiency within one year of identification.
 - Withdrawing approval if deficiencies are not corrected by the deadlines established by the Secretary. (States will be subject to the same rights as a Head Start agency in this case.)
- Also, an independent advisory committee outside of the Department will be contracted to design and conduct a multi-year, scientifically valid, quantitative evaluation of the State demo program. The contract will be awarded within 180 days of enactment of the Act. The evaluation will include.

- A quantitative description of the State pre-K program and Head Start programs within such state, as such programs existed prior to participation in the demo, including:
 - Data on characteristics of the preschool children served, including the overall number and percentages of children served disaggregated by socioeconomic status, race and ethnicity of those served;
 - The quality and characteristics of the services provided to such children; and
 - The educational attainment of instructional staff.
 - A quantitative and qualitative description of the state program after each year of participation, including:
 - Description of changes in the administration of state Program and Head Start programs;
 - Rate of progress in improving school readiness in key Domains of development.
 - Secretary shall provide an interim report on the progress of states no later than October 1, 2006 to the Committee on Education and the Workforce in the House and the HELP Committee in the Senate. A final report to the same audience is due not later than October 1, 2007, including an overall evaluation of state demo's success in increasing availability of high quality pre-K services for low income children compared to a representative sample of non-participating states.

VI. Federal Allotment to States and Base Year

- For statewide programs, States receive 100% of the total allotment.
- For a program limited to a geographic area or areas, the sum of an amount equal to the amount received by grantees in such geographic area or areas for the FY preceding the first fiscal year of the State program, plus,
- An amount representing the same ratio to the excess (if any) above the total number for the preceding year as the number of children less than 5 years from families whose income is below the poverty line in the geographic area or areas compared to the total number of such children in the State.
- The base year is the most recent Federal fiscal year preceding the first fiscal year of the State program under which adequate and reliable data are available as determined by the Secretary.

V. Non-Federal Match

- A five percent non-federal contribution is required in cash or in-kind, including plant, equipment, or services. Amounts required by the State to meet MOE are excluded.

VI. Concerning Local Grantees

- Those serving a geographic area covered by the state plan will continue to receive funds from the State for 36 months in accordance with the terms made to the local grantee prior to the date of enactment after the State receives approval to participate, provided the program does not have any uncorrected deficiencies on HHS monitoring reports during the preceding 5-year period.

- Following the transition, states will choose providers, yet are “strongly encouraged” to continue to use those who provide high quality Head Start services consistent with State guidelines for school preparedness.

VII. Combining Funds with other Early Childhood Education Programs

- A state may combine funds received with funds for other early childhood programs serving children in the same age group.
- The funds received shall not supplant any non-Federal, State or local funds for these or similar purposes.
- The Demo program shall be coordinated with education programs of LEAs in the State to ensure program is designed to transition successfully to kindergarten.
 - Required programs: Early Reading First, Even Start, Title I Preschool; State pre-K programs; Ready-to-Learn TV Program.
 - Optional programs: CCDBG programs and other publicly funded early childhood education programs.
 - A Parent may choose the preschool program for their child.
 - States shall provide services “at least as extensive as were provided, and to at least as many low-income children and families in each fiscal year as were provided such services with such funds in the base year in the State (or geographic area).”
- The following comprehensive activities must be included in the program to promote school readiness:
 - Activities that promote cognitive and language development, pre-reading, and pre-mathematics knowledge and skills, physical development, health, and nutrition and social development.
 - Activities with the parents of enrolled children directed at enhancing and encouraging the education of their children.
 - Activities directed at securing family support services for enrolled children and their families, primarily through “referral” and coordination with local, State and Federal entities that provide such services (incl. all HS services, other than Indian/migrant/seasonal HS programs).
- The Demo may not include Early Head Start, Indian and migrant and seasonal head start services.