



## GRANT INFORMATION GUIDE

# Ready for Kindergarten (R4K) Grant Program

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

**Deadline**  
June 3, 2022  
No later than 5:00 pm EST

MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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## Program Description

The Ready for Kindergarten (R4K) Grant is a grant program administered by the Division of Early Childhood at the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE). The Early Childhood Assessment System includes the Ready for Kindergarten ([R4K](#)) assessment system and the Early Learning Assessment (ELA), which aligns with the new Maryland Early Learning Standards. Data from the R4K are used to inform teachers, families and schools about the learning needs of students as they enter Kindergarten. The R4K Grant provides funding for professional learning initiatives, the Child Development Associate (CDA) credential for Prekindergarten Assistant Teachers, the planning for a coordinated Prekindergarten mixed delivery enrollment process, as well as accreditation in the Maryland EXCELS program.

Grant funds must be used to support initiatives for continuous improvement using the R4K comprehensive assessment system for Prekindergarten and Kindergarten. This includes the fidelity of the administration and professional development focused on the reliability of the assessment, data-based instructional decision-making, and research-based content and pedagogical best practices.

### NAME OF GRANT PROGRAM

Ready for Kindergarten Grant

### AUTHORIZATION

House Bill 1300 Blueprint for Maryland's Future, Education Article [§5-230](#)

### PURPOSE

Provide support for the administration of the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) and professional learning activities to improve teacher practices in order to increase Prekindergarten students' readiness for Kindergarten and to support Kindergarten students' learning. R4K Grant funds also support program credentialing and coordinate with private child care providers.

### DISSEMINATION

This Grant Information Guide (GIG) was released on May 6, 2022.

### DEADLINE

Proposals are due no later than 5:00 p.m. on June 3, 2022.

### GRANT PERIOD

June 15, 2022 – December 30, 2023

### FUNDING AMOUNT AVAILABLE

\$6.3 million

### ESTIMATED NUMBER OF GRANTS

24

## GRANT AMOUNT

All LEAs are eligible for a base award of \$200,000. Additional funds are calculated using a formula based on the number of Prekindergarten and Kindergarten students served in each LEA as compared to the state total. Grant amounts range from \$203,421 to 4441,944. See the [LEA Funding Allotment chart](#) in the appendix.

## SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

Grant applications must be submitted by June 3, 2022, via email to [Erika.Anderson@maryland.gov](mailto:Erika.Anderson@maryland.gov). Download the R4K Application here, complete it, and save as "Name of LEA\_R4K23 Grant Proposal". In the email subject line, write "R4K FY23 Grant Proposal".

## STATE RESPONSIBILITIES

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

## PROGRAM CONTACT

Erika Anderson  
Education Program Specialist  
Early Learning Branch  
Division of Early Childhood  
(410) 767-0646  
[Erika.anderson@maryland.gov](mailto:Erika.anderson@maryland.gov)

## Eligibility

Local Education Agencies (LEAs) are eligible to apply for funding.

## Use of Funds

R4K funds may be used for:

- Salaries, wages, and fringe benefits.
- Equipment, materials and supplies that directly support grant activities.
- Technology costs (may not exceed 10% of the total fund request) and must be directly related to grant activities.
- Contracted services must include a description or scope of work.
- Instructional Assistants to earn a Child Development Associate (CDA) (funds are capped at \$500 per Instructional Assistant and may only be used to cover the cost of the CDA course).
- Up to 10% of funds can be used to purchase classroom supplies and materials aligned with EXCELS and accreditation requirements.

Funds may not be used for:

- Supplanting existing services.

- Classroom supplies and materials not related to professional learning goals and initiatives.
- Purchase of any technology software or third party to develop an operational online enrollment system.
- Out-of-state travel.

## Funding Initiatives

Applicants have access to funding to support the following initiatives within the Blueprint for Maryland's Future:

- A. Professional Learning to support Early Learning Assessment and instruction – Funds may provide support for Instructional Assistants to obtain a Child Development Associates ([CDA](#)). By 2025-2026, Instructional Assistants must have at least a CDA. Formula funds will be calculated to support LEAs by funding \$500 per Prekindergarten Instructional Assistant who registers for the course to obtain the CDA credential. These funds must go towards paying the course fee. Additionally professional development opportunities may include both public and private Prekindergarten and Kindergarten staff.
- B. [Maryland EXCELS rating](#) and [Accreditation](#)– Funds may support the planning, development and monitoring of schools pursuing an EXCELS rating and Accreditation in order to meet the Blueprint for Maryland's Future Prekindergarten requirements.
- C. Development of Prekindergarten Mixed Delivery System – Funds may support plans that address the requirements within the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the LEA and the eligible private providers in their jurisdiction. See education statute [§7-1A-05](#) for requirements of the MOU. Funds may be used to:
  - a. Provide technical assistance and consultation services to eligible private providers related to kindergarten readiness, curriculum, professional development, school readiness, and services for student subgroups;
  - b. Offer professional development opportunities to eligible private provider teachers and instructional assistants;
  - c. Provide information about Child Find and work with staff members to coordinate a smooth transition of children and families from the prekindergarten program available to 3-year-old or 4-year-old children of (private provider) to kindergarten in (LEA);
  - d. Screen children for English language proficiency and provide guidance to ensure that children entering kindergarten receive appropriate services and support for their English language learning; and/or
  - e. Establish and maintain open communication between the eligible private provider and the public school system to support students and families.

## Program Requirements

Applications must provide professional learning opportunities to new and returning Kindergarten teachers, prekindergarten teachers, as well as other certified teachers who are responsible for the readiness of students for Kindergarten.

# Application

## PROPOSAL COVER PAGE

Proposals must have the Proposal Cover Page provided in the application for participation. The cover page should not contain any graphics nor additional information and must be signed by the Head of Agency.

## PROGRAM ABSTRACT

Provide a summary of how the Prekindergarten and Kindergarten programs are structured to serve students and families, and how the proposed professional learning opportunities, program accreditations, and/or the development of a Prekindergarten mixed delivery system meet their needs.

## KRA DATA AND ANALYSIS

The KRA is an important tool to measure the student readiness for Kindergarten. Applicants will be required to provide the past 3 years of KRA data and discuss the breakdown of how students performed within the four domains of the KRA, as well as the breakdown of students demonstrating readiness for kindergarten based on race/ethnicity, gender, low-income status, children with disabilities, and English Learners.

## GOAL, OUTCOMES AND MILESTONES

Applicants are required to set an overall goal for how many students will demonstrate readiness for kindergarten as measured by the KRA. When developing an outcome, applicants must choose one or more student groups and domains within the KRA to focus on, as determined by the KRA data analysis. Milestones must be set that measure progress towards meeting the objective and the goal. Determining the program goals and outcomes is an important part of the next step of evaluating your program.

## IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Applicants must address the following three components in their implementation plan:

- Component A: Professional Learning
- Component B: Maryland EXCELS and Accreditation
- Component C: Development of a Prekindergarten Mixed Delivery System

### A. Professional Learning

#### KRA Professional Learning

It is a requirement that applicants must a plan for Professional Learning around the KRA. The KRA is a developmentally appropriate assessment tool administered to incoming public-school kindergarteners. Administered by kindergarten teachers at the start of the school year, the KRA looks at the knowledge, skills, and behaviors necessary to be successful in kindergarten, broken down into four domains: social foundations; language and literacy; mathematics; and physical well-being and motor development. There are three different levels of school readiness indicated by the KRA:

- Demonstrating Readiness: A child demonstrates the foundational skills and behaviors that prepare them for curriculum based on the kindergarten standards;
- Approaching Readiness: A child exhibits some of the foundational skills and behaviors that prepare them for curriculum based on the kindergarten standards; and



- Emerging Readiness: A child displays minimal foundational skills and behaviors that prepare them for curriculum based on the kindergarten standards.

Professional Learning opportunities funded under this program must focus on:

1. The administration of the KRA and data analysis, including:
  - a. How to administer and implement the KRA with fidelity. This includes training and support for Instructional Assistants who support administration as a Test Proctor; and
  - b. The analysis of KRA data and the design of instruction in order to address identified performance gaps, including areas identified where loss of learning impacted kindergarten readiness using Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) trend data; and
2. The domains of the KRA, including:
  - a. Strategies that are evidence-based; and
  - b. Articulation of data and curriculum expectations among the school team of early childhood educators.

### **ELA Professional Learning**

Applicants have the option to use professional learning funds to address the [Early Learning Assessment](#) (ELA). The ELA is a formative tool designed to assess the progress of children between the aged of 36-72 months of age. The ELA is organized in seven domains: social foundations; language and literacy; mathematics; physical well-being and motor development; science; social studies; and fine arts. Applicants may wish to use funds for initial training of Prekindergarten teachers and instructional assistants and/or for continuous professional learning opportunities.

The initial training must cover:

- How to administer the ELA, including training and support for instructional assistants in formative assessment data collection practices in collaboration and support of the certified teacher of record;
- How to align prekindergarten and kindergarten readiness outcomes; and
- How to analyze data and design instruction based on learning trajectories.

Continuous professional learning opportunities may include:

- Training that addresses entering ratings, analyzing student data and reports, and planning instruction in response to student data; or
- Participation in the Virtual ELA Implementation Academy, which provides professional learning and coaching for high-quality local early learning teams to develop and execute an implementation plan that increases the fidelity of ELA implementation at your site and improves outcomes for children and families. Additional information is available in the Resource link.

### **Child Development Associates (CDA)**

With the passing of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, instructional assistants in Prekindergarten classrooms must have at least a Child Development Associate (CDA) certificate or an associate degree by 2025-2026 (see education statute [§7-1A-04](#)). Applicants may wish to utilize grant funds for instructional assistants to register and complete the coursework for the CDA. Applicants must include \$500 for each Instructional Assistant in the budget to pay for the cost of the course. If grant funds are not utilized for

this activity, it is required that the LEAs address in the application how they plan on addressing this requirement using other funding that may apply.

### B. Maryland EXCELS and Accreditation

Maryland [Accreditation](#) is a process in which early education programs commit to continuous quality improvement. Maryland accreditation is a part of the broader [Maryland EXCELS system](#), in which programs earn quality ratings in targeted areas and commit to continuous quality improvement for the children they serve. Maryland EXCELS participants receive a rating from 1 to 5. A rating of 1 is awarded to providers and programs that successfully meet initial requirements, while a rating of 5 is awarded to those that have achieved the highest quality rated programs that demonstrate competence in areas such as staffing and professional development, accreditation, developmentally appropriate practice, compliance with licensing regulations, and administrative policies. Schools with Prekindergarten classrooms in the Maryland State Prekindergarten Program are required to achieve a quality rating level of 5 within 5 years (see education statute [§7-1A-04](#)).

Applicants may use grant funds for classrooms or schools to pursue a level 5 rating within the Maryland EXCELS program and Accreditation. If grant funds are not utilized for this activity, it is required that the LEAs address in the application how they plan on addressing this requirement using other funding that may apply.

### C. Development of Prekindergarten Mixed Delivery System

With the passing of the [Blueprint for Maryland's Future](#), LEAs are required to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with each eligible private provider participating in publicly funded prekindergarten. See education statute [§7-1A-05](#) for requirements of the MOU. Applicants may request up to \$100,000 to meet the requirements within the MOU between the LEA and the eligible private providers in their jurisdiction. LEAs must identify the goal, outcomes(s) and milestones, identify the eligible private providers that are listed in the MOU, describe the activities, timeline and how the implementation of the mixed delivery system will be evaluated. Additionally, a budget narrative is required that details all related expenses in an itemized budget and a description of the sustainability of the plan.

Applicants wishing to fund the development of the plans with the participating eligible private providers in their jurisdiction to meet the requirements of the MOU must describe the collaborative activities that will be held with the private providers, the timeline for accomplishing these activities, and how these activities will be sustained in subsequent years. If grant funds are not utilized for this activity, it is required that the LEAs address in the application how they plan on addressing this requirement using other funding that may apply.

### TIMELINE

Applicants must provide a timeline for all proposed activities using the chart provided in the application. See a sample timeline below:

| Proposed Activities (sample)   | Date of Implementation |
|--|------------------------|
| New Kindergarten teachers will participate in the KRA training.              | August 29, 2022        |
| Returning Kindergarten teachers will participate in the KRA Online Refresher | August 29, 2022        |

|  |                   |
|--|-------------------|
| Training.  |                   |
| Prekindergarten classrooms are chosen to participate in the EXCELS program | July 30, 2022     |
| A Prekindergarten Coordinator is hired (job description is attached)       | September 1, 2022 |

## MANAGEMENT PLAN AND KEY PERSONNEL

Applicants must provide the roles and responsibilities of key personnel and staff involved in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of grant activities. Additionally, applicants will be asked to describe how grant activities will continue in the case of staff turnover.

## EVALUATION

Grantees are required to submit annual evaluation reports and quarterly progress reports that are consistent with the project's goal and outcome(s). Applicants must evaluate the following required measures and set a goal of how success will be measured:

| Evaluation Measure  | Goal |
|---|------|
| Component A. Percentage of students demonstrating readiness on the KRA in the identified student groups and domains   |      |
| Component A. Number of Instructional Assistants supported to earn a CDA (optional)  |      |
| Component B. EXCELS rating and accreditation status of each school participating in the Maryland State Prekindergarten Program  |      |
| Component C. Number of participating private providers in the mixed delivery system and percentage of participation of each provider in the collaborative activities. |      |

**Dissemination:** Details on how the evaluation results will be disseminated to major stakeholders and individuals interested in the project. Information, requirements, and dissemination methods differ from stakeholder to stakeholder. Will information be posted on the Internet? Will presentations be made at important national conferences to present lessons from the project? How and when will demonstrations of the project be provided? Descriptions of the types of reports and other by-products developed during the course of the project may be made available.

## BUDGET AND BUDGET NARRATIVE

The budget should detail all related expenses in an itemized budget. It should demonstrate the extent to which the budget is reasonable and cost-effective. All costs described in the implementation plan should appear in the budget narrative and must have a corresponding entry in the itemized budget for that year. Reviewers should be able to see a clear connection between the project activities and the budget line items.

Show how the expenses were calculated for each line item. Reviewers will use this information to determine if the budget is reasonable and cost-effective. See a sample budget below:

**1. Salaries & wages (list separately for each position)**

| Line item   | Calculation                     | Requested | Total   |
|---|---------------------------------|-----------|---------|
| Teacher stipend for Prek and K articulation on KRA results (after school hours) | \$25/hr x 2 hours x 80 teachers | \$4,000   | \$4,000 |
| Total for salaries & wages:   |                                 | \$2,000   | \$4,000 |

**4. Other Charges**

| Line item  | Calculation    | Requested | Total    |
|--|----------------|-----------|----------|
| 40 IAs to earn CDA by taking CDA courses, cost \$500 | 40 IAs x \$500 | \$20,000  | \$20,000 |
| Total for contracted services:                       |                | \$20,000  | \$20,000 |

## APPENDIX

The following Appendices must be included in the proposal for funding.

- A [signed C-1-25 MSDE budget form](#), encompassing the total requested amount. Do not submit a separate C-1-25 form for each funding priority area.
- A [signed recipient assurances page](#)

## The Review Process

The review of proposals will be a three-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. Applications will be evaluated by the Program Monitor and Early Learning Branch Chief using the review tool. The review tool is tailored to the grant program, its intent, and intended impact on the target population.
3. All revised proposals and budgets must be resolved by conclusion of the first quarter or risk forfeiture of award.

## REVIEW COMMITTEE

The grant application will be reviewed in the Early Learning Branch of the Early Childhood Department using the R4K Review Tool, which can be downloaded from the R4K website.

## AWARD NOTIFICATION

Notification of approval will be sent by email within 30 days of the deadline to submit proposals. Approved applicants may begin implementing the program as soon as the award notification letter is received. The Notice of Grant Award (NOGA) will be forthcoming within 3 weeks of the approval letter.

## Reporting Requirements

Grantees must comply with the following reporting requirements:

| Date         | Reporting Requirements  |
|--------------|---|
| Ongoing      | Standard invoicing using the Accounting and Financial Reporting system (AFR), including supporting documentation to support expenditures  |
| Nov 15, 2022 | Amendment requests (if applicable)  |
| Spring 2023  | Annual Review Meeting and Site Visits   |
| Mar 16, 2023 | Interim progress reports<br>- <a href="#">MSDE form C125-C</a><br><br>- An R4K interim and final progress reporting tool will be provided to grantees at a later date             |
| Feb 28, 2024 | Final progress and financial reports<br>- <a href="#">MSDE form C125-C</a><br><br>- An R4K interim and final progress reporting tool will be provided to grantees at a later date |

Notes:

Any requests for programmatic amendments must be submitted at least 45 days before the grant period ends, and must be submitted using the C-125-B form found in the [Grant Budget Forms Workbook](#) on the [MSDE grants webpage](#).

Final invoices must be submitted no later than 60 days after the grant period ends.

When submitting an amendment request, include the grant number in the subject line and name the document Name of LEA\_R4K23 Grant #Amendment Request.

When submitting the interim progress report, include the grant number in the subject line and name the document Name of LEA\_R4K23 Grant #Interim.

When submitting the final progress reports, include the grant number in the subject line and name the document Name of LEA\_R4K23 Grant #Final.

## Non-Discrimination Statement

The Maryland State Department of Education 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.

## Customer Service Support Sessions

The MSDE will hold two customer service support sessions for interested applicants. During these sessions, MSDE personnel will provide an overview of the Grant Information Guide, and proposal requirements and opportunities for LEAs to ask questions. Early Learning Supervisors and Coordinators will be invited to attend. To register for a session, send an email to [Erika.anderson@maryland.gov](mailto:Erika.anderson@maryland.gov). See dates and times below:

- May 9, 2022 from 8:30am – 9:30am
- May 11, 2022 from 12:30pm – 1:30pm

## Questions

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

Erika Anderson  
Education Program Specialist  
Early Learning Branch  
Division of Early Childhood  
(410) 767-0646  
[Erika.anderson@maryland.gov](mailto:Erika.anderson@maryland.gov)

A list of frequently asked questions (FAQ) and answers will be posted to the [R4K webpage](#) following customer service support sessions.

## Grant Application Timeline

This funding opportunity, including all attachments and updates, are found on the [R4K webpage](#).

| Date                              | Program Milestone   |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| May 6, 2022                       | The Grant Information Guide and the application are released                            |
| May 9, 2022<br>from 8:30-9:30am   | The MSDE will hold a virtual customer service support session for interested applicants |
| May 11, 2022<br>from 12:30-1:30pm | The MSDE will hold a virtual customer service support session for interested applicants |
| June 3, 2022                      | The grant application period closes   |
| June 3, 2022                      | The MSDE begins reviewing applications for completeness and minimum requirements        |
| Jun 15, 2022                      | The MSDE will notify applicants of decision   |
| Jun 15, 2022                      | The grant period begins   |
| Dec 31, 2023                      | The grant period ends   |

## Appendix

LEA Funding Allocations

**LEA FUNDING ALLOCATIONS**

| LEA                    | % Prekindergarten and Kindergarten Enrollment in Maryland | Formula Allocation | Base Award | Total Funding Allocation |
|------------------------|---|--------------------|------------|--------------------------|
| Allegany County        | 1.1%  | \$16,302           | \$200,000  | \$216,302                |
| Anne Arundel County    | 9.0%  | \$135,379          | \$200,000  | \$335,379                |
| Baltimore City         | 10.4%   | \$156,729          | \$200,000  | \$356,729                |
| Baltimore County       | 12.6%   | \$189,550          | \$200,000  | \$389,550                |
| Calvert County         | 1.5%  | \$22,759           | \$200,000  | \$222,759                |
| Caroline County        | 0.7%  | \$10,633           | \$200,000  | \$210,633                |
| Carroll County         | 2.5%  | \$38,105           | \$200,000  | \$238,105                |
| Cecil County           | 1.8%  | \$26,667           | \$200,000  | \$226,667                |
| Charles County         | 2.9%  | \$43,622           | \$200,000  | \$243,622                |
| Dorchester County      | 0.6%  | \$8,889            | \$200,000  | \$208,889                |
| Frederick County       | 5.1%  | \$76,176           | \$200,000  | \$276,176                |
| Garrett County         | 0.4%  | \$6,725            | \$200,000  | \$206,725                |
| Harford County         | 4.2%  | \$63,077           | \$200,000  | \$263,077                |
| Howard County          | 5.7%  | \$86,054           | \$200,000  | \$286,054                |
| Kent County            | 0.2%  | \$3,421            | \$200,000  | \$203,421                |
| Montgomery County      | 16.1%   | \$241,944          | \$200,000  | \$441,944                |
| Prince George's County | 15.0%   | \$225,441          | \$200,000  | \$425,441                |



|                     |      |               |               |               |
|---------------------|------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Queen Anne's County | 0.9% | \$14,138      | \$200,000     | \$214,138     |
| St. Mary's County   | 2.1% | \$31,312      | \$200,000     | \$231,312     |
| Somerset County     | 0.4% | \$6,306       | \$200,000     | \$206,180     |
| Talbot County       | 0.7% | \$10,180      | \$200,000     | \$210,180     |
| Washington County   | 2.8% | \$42,734      | \$200,000     | \$242,734     |
| Wicomico County     | 2.0% | \$30,138      | \$200,000     | \$230,138     |
| Worcester County    | 0.9% | \$13,719      | \$200,000     | \$213,719     |
| TOTALS:             | 100% | \$1.5 million | \$4.8 million | \$6.3 million |

Source: The percentage of total Prekindergarten and Kindergarten enrollment is based off of the total enrollment from the September 30, 2021 [Maryland Public School Enrollment report](#)