

## Frequently Asked Questions

**QUESTION:** Is there a way to save the application or move to the next page if the page you are currently on is not complete?

**ANSWER:** Yes, the application autosaves. When you go back to the webpage for the application you will be on the last complete page.

**Q:** How can applicants review their application before they submit it?

**A:** After you complete the application and upload all required documentation, you will be directed to a review of your entire application. Then, you will be asked to submit it. The application can be saved and returned later to complete. Prior to submission, applicants are given the opportunity to review their application.

**Q:** The lead teacher has their Elem Ed teaching certificate and a master's in math. Would she be considered qualified as lead teacher for the grant?

**A:** Yes. To qualify as a lead teacher one of the following requirements must be met:

- A bachelor's degree in early childhood education, child development, or related field, or
- A bachelor's degree from another country, verified as equivalent to a U.S. degree, or
- A bachelor's degree in an unrelated field, along with experience or qualifications in early childhood education.
- Educators with 10 years of experience as of July 1, 2025, can qualify, but they must meet additional assessment criteria with a minimum score determined by MSDE on the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) and, by July 1, 2030, earn an associate degree in early childhood education.

To qualify as an assistant teacher one of the following requirements must be met:

- A high school diploma
  - Alternatively, as of July 1, 2025, educators with at least 5 years of documented experience as a teaching assistant in a publicly funded prekindergarten classroom for a minimum of 5 years for at least 20 hours per week and 180 days per year.

**Q:** How will the Superintendent or Head of Agency sign the application if they are not writing the grant themselves?

**A:** The application was updated. Now, you will find the Superintendent or Head of Agency signature requirement on the last page of the application. The signatory on the application can review it online by going to the application page, or in hard copy from the grant writer's application worksheet.

Q: I currently have 20 slots. I want to add 10 new slots. Am I completing an application for 10 slots or 30 slots? If adding spots, the new application is just for the new slots, correct?

A: Just the 10 additional slots. The application needs to be completed only if you want to add new slots. The 20 existing slots will be automatically funded under the Blueprint Funding Formula for programs that are “in good standing.”

Q: What if you are waiting on EXCELS to rate? I've been waiting since January.

A: You must have a Maryland EXCELS level 3 (private providers) or level 4 (public providers) rating at the time of submitting your application. If you have questions regarding the status of your published EXCELS level, please contact your Quality Assurance Specialist.

Q: If a lead teacher does not have ECE cert, but does have a B.S., do they still need to be paid commensurate with the LEA starting teacher salary?

A: Lead teachers who are P-3 certified must be paid a salary commensurate to at least the minimum on the local LEA salary schedule. If a Lead Teacher holds a bachelor's degree and is not certified, an exact commensurate salary is not required. If the LEA has a scale for non-certified teachers, providers may use that for a commensurate salary. The GIG states paid a commensurate salary "based on credentials and experience."

Q: If you are moving location/type from large family to a small center and it will take time to transfer the EXCELS over, do you still qualify for the grant? When would EXCELS need to be at Level 3 at the new location?

A: The new site must have a Quality Rating of 3 at the time of application.

Q: Is there a way to go back and edit the online application?

A: Yes, you may use the back and next button to edit all pages of the application except for the cover page containing your program name, address, license number, and other general information. Ensure that this page is accurate before moving on.

Q: How do I complete the accreditation/EXCELS rating table? I am not able to move forward unless all 8 boxes are complete even if you do not have 8 programs.

A: You can add “NA” (not applicable) to the boxes.

Q: How are the 10 years of experience going to be verified for an educator qualifying through the experience pathway? Could you use the PQE from OCC to document the teacher's 10 years of experience?

A: No, the PQE Form may not be used. Please include a resume for the lead teacher with documentation of at least 10 years of experience as a lead Prekindergarten

teacher. The PQE Form does not document 10 years of experience as of July 1, 2024, per the Blueprint requirements. The PQE Form documents education, training, and 2 years of experience.

**Q:** Can we utilize the Modified Short Form if we are a current grantee expanding seats and adding other locations?

**A:** The online application is tailored to your program. If you are a current grantee requesting new PreK Expansion slots, you will respond yes to the question “Are you a current grantee?” From that point, the application will direct you to the modified short form for your program type (Child Care Center, Head Start, Family Child Care, LEA).

**Q:** What is the definition of an "existing approved program"? We are a childcare provider with multiple locations in MD. Currently, two locations have a contract with MSDE to deliver PreK services. We would like to apply on behalf of additional centers this year. Would that be a new application? Or is our organization considered an "existing program"?

**A:** Your organization is considered an existing program or current grantee and would state that on the application. Later in the application, you will be asked to state the staff and number of PreK Expansion slots you are applying for at each location. State the new location(s).

**Q:** Can we submit one application on behalf of multiple centers? Or should we submit one application for each individual center?

**A:** Yes, you may complete one application for multiple centers.

**Q:** So how do we know the dollar amount of funds we will receive in FY26 if we are a current FY25 Pre-K expansion grantee, and do NOT plan to expand? Our FY25 grant funds FTE staff positions, so it is critical that we know what level of funding will come to us in FY26 to continue with those positions.

**A:** Your current level of funding will be maintained and converted to Blueprint funding if your program is in good standing, and you complete the survey for Blueprint programs. FY26 Funding is \$14,473 per slot.

**Q:** Where can I find a Word doc or paper copy of the FY26 Prekindergarten Grant Application?

**A:** The Application Worksheet is on the [website](#) for applicants to see all the questions in one document. It is at the very bottom in the Additional Pre-K Grant Resources and Documents section on the Maryland PreK Grants Program webpage.

**Q:** What documentation will we need to supply for the seats rolling over to Blueprint?

A: The FY25 slots are automatically converted to Blueprint slots providing your grant is “in good standing.” Additional information will be forthcoming after the survey is completed.

Q: Is there any information yet available about how Blueprint funding will be disbursed?

A: Blueprint funds will be dispersed as reimbursement from submitted invoices in the same way as the Prekindergarten Expansion grant.

Q: Is there a maximum dollar amount awarded to first time applicants?

A: No. We look at all funding requests and the total amount of funds available for awards as well as the geographical area of the programs, and other factors in determining the grant awards.

Q: The application will not accept my iCloud.com email as a valid email. How do I fix this?

A: We will have to check with Qualtrics for this. We cannot tell you how long it will take for them to respond or fix this. Please email Dr. Nykia Washington ([nykia.washington@maryland.gov](mailto:nykia.washington@maryland.gov)). If you have another email address, you may want to consider using it.

Q: If you have both PreK expansion seats and Blueprint seats in the fall, will the 85% fulfillment rate by December be applied to PreK seats only or the aggregate of all seats?

A: All seats

Q: Is there an option for more than two goals to be placed in the application?

A: No, however you may enter more than one goal into the textbox.

Q: What is the numerical amount for each rubric section?

A: See the Grant Information Guide pages 22-27 for more information regarding the scoring process and the rubric used, available here:

<https://marylandpublicschools.org/about/Documents/OFPOS/GAC/GrantPrograms/PreKExpansion/FY26-Pre-K-Expansion-Grant-GIG-A.pdf>

Q: Will the staffing table expand to over 40 locations/program names?

A: No, it will not. If you need more slots, please contact us for an online app to accommodate that volume. Submit it to Dr. Washington & team so they are aware of the request and the Qualtrics administrator will make the adjustment to the application.

Q: What happens if you cannot fill all the spots in the classroom? Example- if I had 10 approved spots and only 8 get filled- what happens money wise? Do we still get the full grant amount for all 10 spots?

A: 85% of slots must be filled by Dec 31st. If not, the award amount may decrease.

Q: Can you address the difference between the google form that programs are receiving and the modified short form?

A: Current grantees, who are not expanding, should complete the Google form survey which they received by email from the Department; and if a program has questions, they should contact their assigned Pre-K Support Specialist.

Q: What is the difference between the blueprint application for renewals versus a brand-new pre-k expansion grant?

A: There is no Blueprint application for renewals. There is only a Pre-K Expansion Grant application for those new to the grant and current grantees who are expanding slots.

Q: Are last year's pre-k expansion grant recipients now blueprint schools/centers in FY26?

A: Yes. That is correct.

FY 25 Pre-K Expansion slots will be converted to Blueprint slots for the FY 25-26 grant year if the grantee is in good standing as previously mentioned.

Q: Do programs renewing/retaining slots with no additional slots receive a google form. Please explain the difference. Do they need both? Or just the google form.

A: Please have the program managers reach out to their assigned Specialist for guidance on which form to use based on their individual needs.

Q: Are current grantees who are not adding spots required to complete the budget narrative?

A: Yes. You will be prompted to upload an FY 26 C-125 Budget Form and Budget Narrative in the survey.

Q: Can we use the grant forms from last year?

A: No, you must use the FY26 online application and all associated documents.

Q: For a center that is transferring to the Blueprint funds (was awarded last year, will not be requesting new slots this year), when can parents begin enrolling children for FY26? Same question for a new center; after the notice of award, how soon can parents begin enrolling children for FY26?

A: Programs may begin enrolling children upon grant award notification. Note: this does not mean that you must wait until you receive a NOGA

Q: Will current bills pending in legislation alter the way Blueprint funding is dispersed, if passed for the FY26 year?

A: More information will be forthcoming.

Q: Can you please explain what the Steps listed on the Professional Salary Schedule Guide mean?

A: Please reach out to your PreK Support Specialist for more support. Typically, salary scale steps designate the number of years of experience an educator has, and salary designate the level of education and certifications an educator has.

Q: Where can we get more information about the sections of the grant?

A: If you would like more information about the sections of the grant, pushtoprek.com has videos and presentations about meeting the grant requirements. <https://marylandchild.org/push-to-pre-k/>

Q: Does a center have to be in business for a certain period before they can apply?

A: Programs are required to meet the eligibility requirements, including being published in Maryland EXCELS at a quality rating of Level 3 or higher. Please see the Grant Information Guide, pg. 4.

<https://marylandpublicschools.org/about/Documents/OFPOS/GAC/GrantPrograms/PreKExpansion/FY26-Pre-K-Expansion-Grant-GIG-A.pdf>

Q: Are there specific curricular guidelines that must be followed? Where are the classroom material / curricular expectations listed?

A: For more information on the expectations for curriculum in PreK Expansion and Blueprint funded classrooms please see the Grant Information Guide, pg. 7. Programs must identify the evidence-based curriculum that will be used for all age groups. Describe how instructional staff will be supported to ensure fidelity of implementation. Note: *Local school systems may cite their district-approved curriculum that aligns with the Maryland College and Career Ready Standards.*

Q: Will the application portal allow you to "save and continue" so that we can come back to complete portions at a time? I did not see that in the presentation of the portal.

A: Yes, it saves automatically. It saves itself for 2 weeks. You may go back and edit your application using the back button.

Q: I made a mistake on my application and now I cannot start a new one. What should I do?

A: Clear the cookies from the webpage and a new application will load. Follow the steps [here](#) to clear cookies from a specific site.

Q: For those with seats rolling over to Blueprint, if you have a few open seats but are well over 85% enrollment, will you get funded for all current seats?

A: Yes, funding will only be decreased if the enrollment is below 85%.

Q: Which MSDE website is YOUR official website that will be updated with all this info, recording, etc.?

A: MSDE's website from the Finance Department shows all funding opportunities. The Division of Early Childhood site is where all the Pre-K Expansion Grant and Pre-K information is held.

<https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/maryland-pre-k-grant-programs>

Q: Will the CLASS score requirements for those without ECE degrees come into play this year?

A: Yes, more information will be forthcoming.

Q: Is Extend of Need a requirement for the modified application?

A: No, please see page 11 of Grant Information Guide.