



Preschool Development Grants

# Development Grants

## GRANTEE ABSTRACT

# Arizona

## Overview

The Preschool Development Grant outlines Arizona's ambitious but achievable plan to make high-quality preschool programs more available and accessible in 15 High Needs Communities (HNC) as well as to support preschool infrastructure-building and quality enhancements. Arizona proposes to use 65% of the funding to increase preschool access and quality for qualifying 4-year olds in targeted HNCs with a proposed project outcome of up to an additional 133 new classrooms and an increase of preschool slots by 3,478 by end of the grant cycle. Using a strengths-based, comprehensive Early Childhood Quality Improvement Process (ECQUIP) community collaboration will be established within each HNC to support sub-grantees with unique, specific issues: increasing access to high-quality and appropriate preschool programs, kindergarten transitions, literacy instruction and supports, English Language Learners, and providing Least Restrictive Environment placements for children with disabilities.

## *Project Objectives and Activities*

Arizona proposes maximizing early childhood education (ECE) infrastructure with 35% of the funding. Arizona will increase access to Arizona's tiered quality rating improvement system (TQRIS), Quality First (QF), in the

### **Lead Agency**

Arizona Department of Education

### **Year 1 Federal Award Amount**

\$20,000,000

### **Plan Period**

January 1, 2015 – December 31, 2018

**Preschool Development Grants** will support states to build, develop, and expand voluntary, high-quality preschool programs for children from low- and moderate-income families.

There are two types of grants.

**Development Grants** are for states that currently serve less than 10 percent of four-year-olds and have not received a Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) grant.

**Expansion Grants** are for states that currently serve 10 percent or more of four-year-olds or have received an RTT-ELC grant.

HNCs by devoting 9.8 million dollars over the next four years. QF is the rating system by which the sub-grantees will be measured as they move towards higher levels of quality, and is also part of the mechanism that will be used to identify and support specific activities and professional development needs. QF also provides additional comprehensive supports to the HNCs in the form of Mental Health Consultation, Child Care Health Consultation, and Inclusion Coaching. Arizona also proposes to advance the collaborative, statewide ECE Professional Development System and improve the qualifications and effectiveness of the early

learning workforce by investing 12.7 million dollars in this strategy over the next four years. This grant will support robust professional development from ADE as well as financially ensures access to higher level college credits that supports movement toward credentialing.

Some of these dollars are also committed to improving capacity within Institutes of Higher Education to offer robust programs for Arizona’s ECE and Early Childhood Special Education degrees. The last infrastructure building component is to establish data linkages between preschool and ADE. Arizona will invest 2.2 million dollars over the next four years in Information technology (IT) to align preschool data with ADE’s K-12 State Longitudinal Data System (SLDS). This will enable reporting and analysis by the HNCs that can help identify achievement gaps, pinpoint initiatives that best promote positive outcomes, and provide data for longitudinal analysis.

Arizona has widespread support for the Preschool Development Grant application, and has secured many letters attesting to this fact. The broad group of stakeholders includes state agencies such as Arizona’s Department of Health Services, Department of Economic Services, and First Things First. Support also came from the statewide collaborative Read on Arizona, a partner in grade level reading initiatives. Arizona’s State Advisory Council is the Early Childhood Development & Health Board which was also supportive of the effort. Arizona’s philanthropic community is generous and supportive of ECE efforts. Both the Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust and the Helios Education Foundation tendered letters of support. The Arizona Head Start Association as well as local grantees also imparted letters of support. Child Advocacy allies, such as Children’s Action Alliance and Expect More Arizona also submitted letters of support. In

addition, the Arizona Association for the Education of Young Children also supplied a letter. Lastly, in each of the 15 HNCs, ECE partners came together to sign a single collective letter of support. Each of these submissions is as different as the communities they represent. Examples of these partners included local FTF Regional Council representatives, private child care, child care homes, faith based programs, school districts and Head Starts.

**High-Need Communities to be Served under Arizona’s Plan**

- Alhambra Elementary District**
- Balsz Elementary District**
- Creighton Elementary District**
- Douglas Unified District**
- Fowler Elementary District**
- Gadsden Elementary District**
- Glendale Elementary District**
- Nogales Unified District**
- Paloma School District**
- Santa Cruz Valley Unified District**
- Somerton Elementary District**
- Sunnyside Unified District**
- Union Elementary District**
- Washington Elementary School District**
- Willcox Unified District**