



## Student Success Act FAQ

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### ECE Sector Planning Phase I

*We received some questions about specific terms used in the ECE Sector Planning Toolkit. Those are detailed below, and most of the other definitions used in the Toolkit can be found in the glossary developed as part of [Raise Up Oregon](#).*

#### **What is meant by “early care and education”?**

“Early care and education (ECE)” means the formal settings outside of the home, regardless of funding source, that provide care and education for children from birth through kindergarten entry.

#### **What is meant by “mixed delivery”?**

“Mixed delivery” means high quality ECE that is offered in a variety of settings, including school districts, Oregon Pre-K/Head Start programs, center- and home-based child care and Pre-K programs, community-based organizations, Relief Nurseries, and Education Service Districts (ESDs). Honoring families’ choices for the type ECE services that will best fit their needs is a key component of a mixed delivery ECE system.

#### **What is meant by “at scale”?**

“At scale” means that every family in Oregon has access to high-quality (developmentally appropriate, culturally responsive, and inclusive) early care and education services that meet their needs in the community where they live, at a cost that they can reasonably afford, and provided within the context of a blended funding, mixed delivery model.

A blended funding, mixed delivery model includes all ECE opportunities that are publicly (federal, state, and local) and privately (philanthropy, business, and parent-paid) funded, and provided in a range of settings including home-based, center-based, and school-based.

## **How can Early Learning Hubs collaborate with K-12 partners during Phase I of ECE Sector Planning?**

The Oregon Department of Education (ODE) has prepared a [Student Investment Account Implementation Toolkit](#) to provide guidance to school districts as they prepare for new funding through the Student Success Act. This guidance includes encouraging districts to engage with Early Learning (EL) Hubs and providers.

The Early Learning Division (ELD) and ODE are working together to help ensure that school districts are at the table as key partners in Phase I of ECE Sector Planning. The ELD strongly recommends that EL Hubs invite K-12 partners, including school districts and ESDs to participate as members of the Regional Stewardship Committees.

K-12 partners have important roles to play in the development of Phase I Deliverables, including:

- Sharing data on student learning and attendance that can inform discussions related to priority populations for Deliverable 1;
- Supporting family and provider engagement for Deliverable 2; and
- Participating in discussions related to emerging regional opportunities for ECE expansion as part of Deliverable 3.

## **How should Hubs consider Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education dollars in their planning?**

We encourage Early Learning Hubs, as part of Sector Planning, reach out and include your local EI/ESCE provider(s) in your local planning. Though not required as a specific deliverable, collaborating at the local level to ensure more inclusive classroom environments is highly encouraged.

## **What is the common message with K-12 and Early Learning about ECE planning and expansion?**

As stated above, all materials encourage close collaboration between Hubs, providers, and K-12 entities when planning expansion. The common message has been that regions must prioritize resources to advance equity – including in the expansion of ECE, which means expansion of aligned, coordinated high-quality programs is the goal for all communities.

## **How can Early Learning Hubs collaborate with Head Start during Phase I of ECE Sector Planning?**

All Oregon Pre-Kindergarten/Head Start grantees throughout the state have received a copy of the Phase I Toolkit and are receiving additional follow up communication from the ELD Program Team. The ELD strongly recommends that EL Hubs invite all Head Start grantees in the region to participate as members of the Regional Stewardship Committees. This is especially important, as the expansion and enhancement of Oregon Pre-kindergarten will be informed by the ECE sector plan.

Head Start grantees have important roles to play in the development of Phase I Deliverables, including:

- Providing and supporting analysis of local data from their Community Assessments that can inform discussions related to priority populations for Deliverable 1;
- Supporting family and provider engagement for Deliverable 2; and
- Participating in discussions related to emerging regional opportunities for ECE expansion as part of Deliverable 3.

## **Could parents be added to ECE sector planning review group?**

The ECE Sector Planning Review is an internal ELD process. Cass Ferder ([cassandra.l.ferder@ode.state.or.us](mailto:cassandra.l.ferder@ode.state.or.us)) who serves as the Family Engagement Coordinator for the Community System Team will be a member of the review group.

## **How can Early Learning Hubs collaborate with Child Care Resource & Referral agencies during Phase I of ECE Sector Planning?**

[House Bill 2025](#) from Oregon's 2019 legislative session states that EL Hubs shall develop ECE sector plans every two years "in consultation with Resource and Referral entities." All Child Care Resource & Referral agencies (CCR&R's) throughout the state have received a copy of the Phase I Toolkit and are receiving additional follow up communication from the ELD Community Systems Team. The ELD strongly recommends that EL Hubs invite CCR&R Directors to participate as members of the Regional Stewardship Committees.

CCR&Rs have important roles to play in the development of Phase I Deliverables, including:

- Participating in data analysis to inform discussions related to priority populations for Deliverable 1
- Sharing data and supporting provider engagement for Deliverable 2
- Participating in discussions related to emerging regional opportunities for ECE expansion as part of Deliverable 3

**What should I do if I have trouble connecting to key partners (CCR&R, Head Start, K-12) in this process?**

If you're having trouble connecting with the CCR&R, school districts or Oregon Pre-Kindergarten/Head Start grantees in your region, contact the ELD for technical assistance. ELD's Community Systems Team can help you identify potential strategies and help facilitate communication and collaboration with key partners.

**Early Learning Hubs have already identified their target populations. Why are we being asked to do so again?**

House Bill 2025 directs EL Hubs to "complete a community plan to identify priority populations of children to enroll in preschool" every two years. Phase I of ECE Sector Planning is the first iteration of that process.

The ELD recognizes that EL Hubs have done significant work to identify priority populations; this prior work can directly inform your ECE sector planning process and should be considered a strong starting point for your discussion. Data from the Preschool Development Grant (PDG) needs assessment will help provide greater depth and context for discussions related to priority populations and access to services.

**What is the intention of Deliverable 3?**

The purpose of Deliverable 3 is to provide EL Hubs and your partners a chance to tell the story of the unique opportunities and partnerships in your region, and to bring to light regional strengths that may not be readily apparent by looking at data. Examples may include a school district that is planning to offer Pre-K starting in the 2020-21 school year, a large employer preparing to offer on-site child care, or a regional chamber of commerce identifying access to child care as one of their priorities. This is not meant to be a visioning exercise, but rather a description of some of the unique highlights and attributes of your EL hub region.

**How much will small providers have to read/interpret/write to the ECE sector plan in their region?**

All applicants will be required to explain how their application is aligned with their region's ECE sector plan.

**Is coordinated enrollment Phase II or just the next phase?**

As included in the ECE sector plan toolkit, coordinated enrollment will be the next discrete part of the regional planning process. More information is forthcoming to Hubs, CCR&Rs, and Head

Start grantees. Phase II will begin in July 2020 and design of this phase is not currently underway yet.

**What should Hubs expect for coordinated enrollment and Phase 2 of ECE sector planning, and when will more information be available?**

ELD is in the final stages of executing a contract funded by Oregon's Preschool Development Grant. The contractor will be responsible for gathering Hub input and reflections on the Phase 1 process to develop recommendations for future phases of planning and to develop tools and resources to support the Hubs in Phase 2. The contractor will also conduct case studies of Hubs and other states and localities that are coordinating enrollment, in order to develop guidance on best practices and lessons learned in implementation. This guidance will be used to inform technical assistance to Hubs that will be new to coordinating Preschool Promise, and will culminate in a learning collaborative on coordinated enrollment for all Hubs.

As noted in the ECE Sector Planning Toolkit, the timeline for Hubs to do this work is as follows:

We expect to fully execute the contract soon and beginning the contractor's work shortly thereafter. The contractor must be finished by the end of February.

**Our review of the information provided had some inaccuracies. Will the information be updated to reflect what Hubs are finding as part of this process? Will the Sector Plan data be utilized to make funding decisions, or will the PDG data be utilized in the decision making process? Is there is a process to correct the differences?**

The Head Start data in the data provided to Hubs is listed at the grantee level, rather than the site level. These data will be corrected in the future, but we do not currently have data by grantee level. The Sector Plan data will serve as an appendix to the Request for Applications (RFA) and applicants will be asked to respond to the plan as part of their application.

## Questions Regarding Funding, Including RFAs

**What is the definition of a network model?**

We are not currently defining a network model. The draft rules propose a definition for Fiscal Agent.

**We have some areas that may not be showing up as priority areas, and currently have funded programs. Will these programs be in jeopardy of not being funded? Will programs be excluded from being considered for additional preschool capacity?**

No, currently funded slots will not be moved based on the sector plans. Sector plans will not be used as a basis for excluded geographic areas. Geography will not be used as a factor to render programs ineligible.

**Providers may serve children who do not live in the zip code where the program is located. How will the ELD take into consideration providers that serve from outlying areas vs providers that serve only in close proximity.**

Providers will be asked to speak to the children they serve on the RFA and coordinate enrollment will help with this issue.

**If providers (current or potential) do not see themselves in the ECE sector plan, will they be excluded/discouraged from applying for funds?**

No

**When will you be defining who can apply as an aggregator/fiscal agent for home and center based providers? Will these fiscal agents be able to apply on behalf of smaller school districts?**

Under the proposed rules, fiscal agents are local entities that may provide services for multiple Preschool Promise providers. The following entities are eligible to apply to be fiscal agents: community-based organizations, culturally specific organizations, Early Learning Hubs, Education Service Districts, Head Start programs, federally recognized Oregon Indian tribes, non-profit organizations, Child Care Resource and Referral agencies, and school districts. All Preschool Promise providers and fiscal agents shall apply directly to the ELD to access grant funding.

**Are there any guidelines or restrictions on Hub involvement in RFA submission by partners?**

Hubs may coordinate with providers should they wish. Hubs are also eligible entities to apply to deliver preschool.

**How will the new Preschool Promise, Oregon Pre-Kindergarten/Head Start and Early Head Start funding be distributed?**

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Funds will be distributed from the Early Learning Division to directly to providers on a quarterly basis.

Qualifying organizations must apply directly to the Early Learning Division through a Requests for Application (RFA) process to receive a grants to be a Preschool Promise provider or an Oregon Pre-Kindergarten/Head Start and Early Head Start Provider.

Qualifying organizations may also apply as “Fiscal Agents” to provide services, such as business services, for multiple Preschool Promise providers. Providers can choose to work with a fiscal agent or not.

**Why do all current programs need to reapply?**

In the case of OPK, all programs must reapply with a proposed enhanced per-child rate for their current slots. The ELD is currently working on salary guidelines to inform these enhancements. OPK programs may also apply to the state to support transportation funding. The RFA will provide additional guidance.

In the case of Preschool Promise, all programs will need to apply as the agreements are changing from contracts between the state and Early Learning Hubs to grants directly from ELD to provider or ELD to fiscal agent. The ELD does not anticipate that current Preschool Promise providers will see reduction in their current slots unless they choose not to apply.

**Who will make the decisions about which applicants receive a grant?**

The ELD will lead the process of reviewing and evaluating applications that are submitted in response to the RFAs. The ELD’s review and evaluation process will include external reviewers. The ELD is working to finalize its review processes.

**Can only small (centers, RF, CF) providers apply via an aggregator? If school districts from a region would prefer to apply via an aggregator, will that be possible?**

Providers will need to apply directly on their own behalf.

**How will the ELD’s RFA process address the potential for supplanting, fragmentation and increased silos?**

The ECE sector planning process is intended to convene all ECE partners to work together to align and strengthen the ECE sector within the region. New funds are intended to supplement, not supplant, existing funding.

**Will the Phase 1 Plans be used to determine allocations between EL Hubs or just within EL Hubs, or will Hub allocations be known prior to RFA release?**

ELD is currently working on developing regional saturation plans, which will provide the range of potential slots available for state-funded programs for each region within the 2019-2021 ECE sector expansion.

**Our region is not nearly as ethnically diverse as many others, but we do have significant populations of generational poverty in rural communities. Will we be overlooked in this process or only given a small number of slots because we are not as diverse as other regions?**

The ELD intends to distribute new slots (approximately 2,500) to all regions in the state. The eligibility requirements for both Preschool Promise and OPK are based on income. Hubs are expected to refine priorities to target with these funds, but fund distribution from the state will be based largely on current number of slots within a region compared to current levels of children in low-income families or poverty.

**When will the RFA process start and end?**

RFAs are planned for release in January 2020 with awards issued in the spring.

**When and where will more information be available about the Request for Application process?**

The ELD will share additional information about the RFAs as the release dates approach. Once each RFA has been released, the ELD will host technical assistance sessions to provide further information.

**Is it correct that only existing OPK or federally funded programs will be eligible to apply for the new Oregon Prekindergarten and Early Head Start slots?**

Yes, only existing grantees are eligible to apply. Other entities are encouraged to reach out to OPK/Head Start grantees if they wish to seek opportunities to partner. This could include providing space for a grantee to offer services, etc.

**We talked briefly about the development of a "readiness self-assessment" (pre-RFA) for providers in preparation for deciding whether or not to fill out an application. Is that still in the mix? And, if so, is there an ETA for that?**

As part of the introduction to the RFA or as a separate document, the ELD will provide a brief self-assessment for providers to determine if they are eligible to apply for a Preschool Promise grant. This self-assessment will include questions related to eligibility, capacity and readiness to implement Preschool Promise services in alignment with legislatively required timelines.

## Administrative Rulemaking

**What are the next steps in rulemaking for SSA investments?**

All rules pertaining to SSA are currently noticed on the Secretary of State website and will be available on ELD's website. SIA rulemaking is occurring through a separate process at ODE. At this time, there are not specific rules on the early learning account.

## **When will the Early Learning Council vote to promulgate rules for the Student Success Early Learning Account?**

The Early Learning Council will not promulgate rules for the Early Learning Account as a whole, but rather for the individual programs it operates. ELD will seek approval for necessary new rules or rule changes in January 2020. This includes the Preschool Promise, Oregon Prekindergarten, and Equity Fund programs. Rules related to Preschool Promise and Oregon Pre-Kindergarten/Head Start & Early Head Start are expected to focus on changes necessary to align with HB 2025. A Rules Advisory Committee will be convened in December to advise on adoption of rules for The Equity Fund.

A public comment period will be held for each of these promulgation processes. To learn more about opportunities for potential engagement, please visit the ELD website Student Success page, where information about these opportunities will be posted.

## **Other Programs and Issues**

### **How and when will Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education (EI/ECSE) funds be allocated?**

EI/ECSE Funds are administered by the Oregon Department of Education's Office of Enhancing Student Opportunities through EI/ECSE Contractors. For further information on how these funds will be allocated in the 2020-21 school year, contact Kara Williams, Director of EI/ECSE, at [kara.williams@ode.state.or.us](mailto:kara.williams@ode.state.or.us) or your local EI/ECSE contractor.

### **How and when will Early Childhood Equity Fund dollars be distributed?**

Early Childhood Equity Fund program dollars (totaling approximately \$10 million for fiscal year 2021) will be allocated through a Request for Application process in early 2020. We encourage Hubs to reach out to local culturally specific organizations in your ECE sector planning.

### **Is the ELD considering implementing a sliding fee scale for families who do not qualify for Preschool Promise or Oregon Prekindergarten?**

Current legislation does not permit the use of a Preschool Promise slot or Oregon Prekindergarten (OPK) slot to support a family or child who does not qualify for the program – i.e., family income of 200% or below of the Federal Poverty Line or 100% or below of the Federal Poverty Line, respectively. This would require a legislative change. However, providers are encouraged to enroll children whose families pay tuition alongside families in these programs. Programs are not prohibited from implementing a sliding fee scale for such families.

### **Is there more information available about the Healthy Families Oregon (HFO) funding process? Will there be a needs assessment opportunity/process and is there any opportunity**

**to look at this in conjunction with universally offered home visiting roll out from Home Visiting System's approach?**

Healthy Families Oregon funding will be distributed through an application process. A Request for Applications will be announced in spring 2020 and more details on eligibility are forthcoming.

If you have questions about the rollout of Family Connects, contact Jordan Barron-Kennedy, Community Systems Manager, [Jordan.B.Kennedy@state.or.us](mailto:Jordan.B.Kennedy@state.or.us).

**Which Relief Nurseries are eligible for new funding?**

Relief Nurseries selected for expansion have already submitted their applications to the Oregon Association of Relief Nurseries and were named during the legislative process.

**Is the Education Grant Management System (EGMS), the system that providers will use to request payment, available in other languages?**

EGMS is not currently available in languages other than English. However, ELD is committed to providing supports to ensure non-English speaking grantees have access to assistance necessary to support grant administration.

**Where would I direct requests to have input on program implementation?**

For input opportunities, please ensure you are following the ELD on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), and bookmark and check our [Student Success Act page](#) regularly. There will be opportunities for input on program implementation through the rule-making process, guidelines/standards development, and others. All input opportunities will be shared via social media and our website.

***Please use [this form](#) to submit additional questions not addressed in this FAQ. If you want to speak to someone directly, contact Seth Allen at [seth.allen@ode.state.or.us](mailto:seth.allen@ode.state.or.us)***