



START SMART INITIATIVE

MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

PURPOSE:

“Expanding access to early childhood education is proven to boost academic achievement in school and improve opportunities later in life – in short, a smart investment with a big return.” Governor Jay Nixon

Children’s participation in pre-kindergarten contributes to success in elementary, secondary and post secondary education which ultimately impacts career opportunities. The Department is providing resources to support the development of new or the expansion of existing high-quality early childhood and pre-kindergarten educational opportunities specifically directed at children of low and moderate income families.

The Missouri Department of Economic Development (DED) Division of Business and Community Services is accepting applications for financial assistance to support capital improvement and program start up costs related to Governor Nixon’s “Start Smart Initiative”.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS:

Applicants for funding must be Missouri non-profit organizations. Applicants to CDBG must be from the unit of local government but may be made on behalf of the eligible non-profit. Applicants to NAP may be direct from the eligible non-profit. Regardless of funding source, each non-profit applicant must assemble a team that includes the local government or governments and school district or districts where the project will occur. Non-profits may provide the pre-kindergarten services as a part of their operating functions or they may contract with public school districts to provide the service.

FUNDING SOURCES

Quality early childhood education opportunities are not universally available throughout Missouri. To support the Governor’s efforts to make early childhood education available to more Missouri children, the Department is making available \$7 million dollars in a combination of grants and contribution tax credits (\$2 million from the State Community Development Block Grant Program and \$2 million in 50% credits to capture \$4 million in donations from the Neighborhood Assistance Program).

The funding sources available each have specific rules and restrictions governing their use. Applicants may not be eligible for both funding sources. Applicants must ensure they are applying to the correct funding source.

CDBG funds may only be used for capital improvements. NAP may be used for both capital improvements and one-time start up costs. To determine the correct application source, follow the series of questions below:

Community Development Block Grant = CDBG and Neighborhood Assistance Program = NAP

1. Does your proposal to DED include one-time /start up costs?..... If yes, apply for NAP only.
2. Is your project and service area located within Blue Springs, Columbia, Florissant, Independence, Jefferson City, Jefferson County and the cities within Jefferson County who have elected to participate in the County entitlement programs, Joplin, Kansas City, Lee’s Summit, O’Fallon, Springfield, St. Charles, St. Charles County and the cities within St. Charles County who have elected to participate in the County entitlement programs (Cottleville, Dardenne Prairie, Lake St. Louis, St. Paul, St. Peters, Weldon Spring, and Wentzville), St. Joseph, St. Louis (city), St. Louis County, and the cities within St. Louis County who have elected to participate in the County entitlement programs (Ballwin, Bella Villa, Bellefontaine Neighbors, Bellerive, Bel-Nor, Bel-Ridge, Berkeley, Beverly Hills, Breckenridge Hills, Brentwood, Bridgeton, Calverton Park, Charlack, Cool Valley, Country Club Hills, Dellwood, Edmundson, Ellisville, Eureka, Fenton, Ferguson, Flordell Hills, Glen Echo Park, Glendale, Greendale, Hanley Hills, Hazelwood, Hillsdale, Jennings, Kinloch, Kirkwood, Mackenzie, Maplewood, Maryland Heights, Moline Acres, Normandy, Northwoods, Norwood Court, Olivette, Overland, Pagedale, Pasadena Hills, Pasadena Park, Pine Lawn, Richmond Heights, Riverview, Rock Hill, St. Ann, St. John, Sycamore Hills, University City, Uplands Park, Valley Park, Velda Village, Velda Village Hills, Vinita Park, Vinita Terrace, Webster Groves, Winchester, and Woodson Terrace)?

..... If yes, apply for NAP only.
3. Does your facility serve an area that is at least 51% low to moderate income (LMI) that is not in an entitlement area (above)? Click on "Determine Low to Moderate Income Benefit for your Project" above or contact Andy Papan at andy.papan@ded.mo.gov or 573-751-3600
If yes, apply for either CDBG or NAP.

PROGRAM BENEFITS/ELIGIBLE USES:

CBBG and NAP allow for eligible capital improvement costs that may include acquisition, new building construction, rehabilitation of existing properties, and related soft costs associated: appraisal; closing costs; engineering and architectural costs; inspections; and permitting. NAP also allows for program start-up costs that may include costs such as furniture, fixtures and equipment related directly to curriculum delivery. Applicants may seek either capital improvement funds or programming funds, or both.

FUNDING LIMITS:

Applications to NAP are limited to \$250,000 in 50% tax credits.
There is a \$1 million limit per applicant for the CDBG program.

APPLICATION/APPROVAL PROCEDURE:

The application process includes 2 Steps:
1. Step 1 requires interested non-profit organizations to determine which funding source is applicable to its project.
2. Step 2 Complete the applicable Program Application and submit to DED. RESPONSES ARE DUE IN THE OFFICE OF DED NO LATER THAN 5:00 P.M. ON May 13, 2016. The responses to the applications will be evaluated by DED and Department of Elementary and Secondary Education staff. Successful respondents will be notified in writing by DED.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS:

Recipients of grants and tax credits under the program will be required to submit information to DED using standardized reporting forms at prescribed time periods during the life of the project.

SPECIAL PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS:

Applicants' programming should be consistent with the same eligibility criteria necessary to receive funding from the Missouri Preschool Project. Those criteria may be found on the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) website at <http://dese.mo.gov/eel/el/MPP/index.htm>. Each applicant shall also adhere to the Early Learning Program Guidance provided through DESE, which may be found on the DESE website at <http://dese.mo.gov/eel/el/documents/eel-el-2014-EarlyLearningProgramGuidance.pdf>.

Eligible projects must benefit low and moderate income individuals. Low and moderate income is defined as household incomes below 80% of the county median household income. The low and moderate income requirement may be satisfied by either (1) attendance at the at the pre-school limited solely to children from low and moderate income families; or, (2) the pre-kindergarten facility/program is located within a defined service area where 51% of the households meet the low and moderate income definition. (The LMI information by county may be found at <http://ded.mo.gov/upload/2014IncomeLimits.pdf>. If you have questions or need additional guidance to determine the correct LMI thresholds for your project, please contact andy.papan@ded.mo.gov).

WEBINAR

In order to assist interested parties in preparing successful proposals, the Department has provided an instructional webinar to review the content of the applications. It can be found under Links and is titled "Start Smart Initiative Application Process Webinar."

CONTACT

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