

NEBRASKA PRESCHOOL DEVELOPMENT GRANT



PDG Renewal Application

The Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services has submitted a three-year, \$30 million Preschool Development Grant Renewal proposal designed to improve the quality of early childhood services and expand access to the most vulnerable families while strengthening and streamlining state-level infrastructure.

The proposal builds on the accomplishments of the first year PDG grant, including the comprehensive needs assessment and statewide strategic plan. It was also designed to leverage the community-level leadership and infrastructure that have been built over many years and to accelerate progress at both the local and state levels.

Representatives from DHHS, NDE, NCFE, BECI, BECF and First Five Nebraska worked with a professional grant writer over a 45-day period to develop the proposal. This compressed timeline meant that the renewal application had to be written before the strategic plan was complete. In order to ensure maximum alignment between the emerging strategic plan and the PDG renewal grant, the team included the strategic plan consultant and others closely involved with the strategic plan development process.

The writing team used several key principles for determining the content of the proposal, including:

- The ability of a given project to address a challenge identified in the needs assessment
- A project's alignment with the priorities in the emerging strategic plan
- How well-suited a project would be to a one-time, three-year infusion of funding
- Balancing a focus on Nebraska priorities with the need to score points across a wide-ranging rubric to ensure a competitive proposal

The proposal was also designed to complement and augment other related activities, such as the Pritzker infant/toddler policy agenda also currently in development.

The US Department of Health and Human Services anticipates awarding 23 grants, with awardees to be announced by the end of December. Questions about the proposal may be directed to Nicole Vint - nicole.vint@nebraska.gov.

Expected Outcomes from a PDG B-5 Renewal Grant:

- Continually updated information about the status of young children in Nebraska to inform decision-making at the state, community, and program level, with an emphasis on improving capacity in rural communities;
- Stronger community-level infrastructure to help families learn about available early childhood programming, and to help connect families to the services they need;
- Expanded efforts to engage with families, obtain information about their needs, inform them about child development, and connect them to services to benefit their young children;
- A stronger early childhood workforce, supported by a coherent set of professional development (PD) initiatives and meaningful incentives to stay and grow in the field; Improved services for infants and toddlers to begin the birth-to-five years, and stronger transitions into kindergarten to end them;
- A stronger, more integrated state system with updated governance and finance policies that support community-level leadership;
- A Nebraska public that is well-informed about the importance of child development, the impact of the grant, and the state's investment in early childhood; and
- Evaluation results that inform continuous quality improvement.