



Iowa

Shared Visions Preschool Program

Iowa distributes the Shared Visions Preschool funds to public schools and community-based providers on a competitive basis. About half of children are served in public schools, one-third in Head Start programs, and the rest in child care settings. The program gives priority to children from low-income families and those with other developmental risks. All programs must be accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) in order to participate.

Eligibility

Income: 80 percent of children must be from families earning less than 130 percent of the federal poverty level (FPL)

Age: 3- to 5-year-olds (as of September 15)

Priority: children from families earning less than 130 percent FPL (80 percent), and children who have other risk factors, including developmental delay, limited English proficiency, teen parent, parent who has not completed high school, parent who is a substance abuser, mentally ill parent, illiterate parent, incarcerated parent, or abusive parent (20 percent). Families with at-risk children earning about 130 percent FPL pay according to a sliding fee scale.

Length of Program

Hours/day: minimum three hours per day, four days per week

Days/year: academic year

Eligible Providers

Public school districts, child care centers, community agencies, and Head Start programs

Number Served¹

2,360 (2002-03): 54 percent in public schools; 33 percent in Head Start; and 13 percent in licensed, nonprofit child care

Total Annual Budget

\$6.89 million (2003), in general state funds

Monitoring

All programs, regardless of setting, must be accredited by NAEYC. Children served in Head Start settings must meet Head Start's Performance Standards, and child care centers must be licensed. There is no monitoring by the state Department of Education.

¹ For updated figures on the program budget and number served, please see the NIEER State Preschool Yearbook at: <http://nieer.org/yearbook/states/>

Governance

How are state pre-k programs integrated into community-based settings?

The statute requires the Department of Education's Child Development Coordinating Council to encourage the submission of grant requests from all potential providers of child development services. A rating team—comprising members with expertise in child development programs and fiscal management experience, including representatives from local school districts, universities, and local education associations—reviews and ranks the proposals according to criteria that include: demonstration of community support, and utilization of services provided by other community agencies. The Department of Education has control of the funds and makes the final determination based on input from the Council.

Are there requirements to integrate the state pre-k and subsidized child care programs at the state or local level?

At the state level, the statute requires the Child Development Coordinating Council to include administrators from the departments of education, human services, and public health; an early childhood specialist of an area education agency; experts in family and consumer sciences, education, and pediatrics from local universities; and a Head Start parent. The council also includes a representative from the Head Start State Collaboration office and two members of the Iowa Head Start Association. The council advises the Department of Education on policy issues related to the program; the department handles administrative tasks independently.

Procedures and Supports for Community-based Providers

What are the rules/guidelines for notifying and selecting pre-k providers?

The statute requires the Child Development Coordinating Council to issue a public notice when opening an application period for additional funds. Applications for the grants shall be distributed by the Department upon request. Because no additional funds have been allocated by the state legislators since 1996 the number of grantees has remained consistent.

Applicants are evaluated on the following criteria:

- Provision of a comprehensive child development program;
- Limited class size;
- Limited adult to child ratios;
- Provision for parental involvement;
- Demonstration of community support;
- Utilization of services provided by other community agencies;
- Use of qualified teachers;
- Existence of a plan for program evaluation including, but not limited to, measurement of student outcomes; and
- Developmentally appropriate practices.

A team of experts ranks the proposals according to these criteria and makes recommendations to the Child Development Coordinating Council. The Council makes the final selection.

What resources are available to help providers become eligible to deliver pre-k services?

No resources are specifically targeted to help providers become eligible for the Shared Visions preschool grants. There are resources to raise the overall quality of early education, such as a T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® program, and assistance in seeking NAEYC accreditation.

Do teachers working in community settings earn comparable wages and benefits once they obtain the same credential as teachers in school-based settings?

There are no requirements to do this.

Supports for Working Families

Is there any explicit discussion in the legislation or regulations of extending the day, coordinating with the child care subsidy program, or helping working families?

Yes. Legislation requires that when making grant decisions, the council must consider the ability of the program to provide child care for families requiring full-day services and the degree to which the program complements existing child care services. Providing full-day services is not required by law, but programs that provide full-day services receive a higher score in the grant application process.

What policies help working families access pre-k and other supports?

Shared Visions provides developmental screenings to all children. The legislation requires the council to consider the provision of transportation or other auxiliary services that may be necessary for families to participate in the program. About half of the grantees provide transportation so children may access the preschool services.

While not required, many grantees collaborate to provide quality child care services to working families. About half of the grantees provide wraparound care, mostly by using wraparound funds from other sources.

Funding

What is the per-child payment for the pre-k program?

State funds are allotted to the grantee on a competitive basis, and there is no per-child standard. NIEER estimates the state spends an average of \$2,903 per child.

How does the state pre-k funding affect other potential sources of funds for a provider?

There is no impact on other funding sources. Child care programs may receive a full subsidy reimbursement and the full pre-k allocation. Head Start programs can receive their full Head Start and pre-k allocations.

Sources

- Interview: Penny Milburn, 06/04/2004
- Website: <http://www.state.ia.us/educate/ecese/is/cdcc/index.html>
- Legislation: <http://www.legis.state.ia.us/IACODE/2001/256A/3.html>,
<http://www4.legis.state.ia.us/IAChtml/281.htm>
- Program Guidelines and Requirements: the grant application and year-end report are available at <http://www.state.ia.us/educate/ecese/is/cdcc/grants.html>; State-Funded Shared Visions Program Annual Report to the Governor is available at <http://www.state.ia.us/educate/ecese/is/cdcc/documents.html>

For information about national trends, read CLASP's *All Together Now: State Experiences in Using Community-Based Child Care to Provide Pre-kindergarten* at http://www.clasp.org/publications/all_together_now.pdf.