



Oregon

Oregon Head Start Pre-kindergarten Program

Oregon modeled its state pre-kindergarten program on the federal Head Start program in order to extend services to more low-income 3- and 4-year-olds in the state. The state provides funding to federal Head Start programs and community-based providers to provide the same services as Head Start. All programs are required to comply with the federal Head Start Program Performance Standards, which include providing comprehensive services to children and families. State-funded programs can enroll up to 20 percent of children who exceed the federal poverty level, while the federal Head Start rules allow only 10 percent.

Eligibility

Income: 80 percent of children must have families earning below the federal poverty level

Age: 3- and 4-year-olds

Priority: at least 10 percent of children must have disabilities

Length of Program

Hours/day: locally determined; minimum of three and one-half hours per day and 474 contact hours per year

Days/year: locally determined; minimum of 32 weeks per year

Eligible Providers

School districts, Head Start grantees, Community Action Agencies, child care centers, and community colleges. Any grantee may sub-contract with other governmental, nongovernmental, or nonsectarian organizations, including family child care providers. Of 30 grantees total, 15 are private nonprofits, seven are community action agencies, five are public schools, and three are institutions of higher education. All of these grantees may sub-contract with other community organizations to operate the program.

Number Served¹

3,869 (2002): 3,698 through state general funds, 171 through other sources; 83 percent of children are in community-based settings

Total Annual Budget

\$26.1 million (2002) in state general funds

Monitoring

The Oregon Department of Education and the Region 10 Head Start office conduct joint monitoring. Programs receive an in-depth review every three years and receive technical assistance. All programs must meet the federal Head Start Program Performance

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

Standards, including comprehensive services. Any program operating more than four hours per day must also be licensed by the child care office.

Governance

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

The statute states that “public or private nonsectarian organizations” may apply to participate in the program. Community-based programs may apply directly to the department of education for pre-kindergarten funds. In addition, there is a written intergovernmental collaborative agreement between the Oregon Department of Education and the Region 10 Head Start office to articulate how grantees can integrate the federal Head Start program and the state pre-k program.

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

The Oregon Head Start Pre-kindergarten Program is primarily a collaboration between the state department of education and Head Start grantees. However, funding is not limited to Head Start grantees. To promote collaboration with other early education providers in the implementation of the pre-k program, the statute requires the Oregon Department of Education and the Office of Community College Services to establish an advisory committee composed of interested parents and representatives from: the State Commission on Children and Families, health care profession, early childhood education and development staff preparation programs, Oregon Head Start Association, school districts, community colleges, Early Intervention Council, child care and other organizations as considered necessary by the department. This committee, called the Early Childhood Initiatives Advisory Committee, also has advisory functions for the Head Start collaboration project and Even Start.

The state also has an informal Head Start Child Care Work Group, comprised of representatives from the Head Start community, child care resource and referral agencies, and staff from the Oregon Departments of Human Services and Education. The purpose of the group is to support local efforts to integrate and implement best practices for comprehensive child development services to address the needs of working parents. The Work Group has done extensive work on putting together child care contracts for Head Start programs so families receive seamless, full-day, full-year care with protected eligibility. This group is not mandated, but meets informally to conduct ongoing problem-solving around contracts.

At the local level, regulations require programs to coordinate with each other, with federal Head Start programs, and with other community programs to insure efficient delivery of services and prevent overlap. When applying for grant funds, programs must submit a service area coordination agreement that includes written support from other programs in their local areas.

Procedures and Supports for Community-based Providers

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

There is a statewide application process, through which existing grantees, the Head Start

Association, schools, child care programs licensed through the Child Care Division, migrant programs, and tribes all learn about the opportunity to participate. The state holds public forums, at which interested parties can ask questions about the program. The last time the program was expanded was 1998-99.

The Early Childhood Initiatives Advisory Committee reviews the proposals and makes recommendations to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction regarding which proposals should be funded or rejected. The committee will prioritize the proposals to the extent practicable, and may include regionally based percentages of unmet needs in order to distribute funds as widely as possible throughout the state. The final decisions regarding the pre-kindergarten program proposals will be made by the Oregon Superintendent of Public Instruction.

The application process is the same regardless of the type of program applying. There is no on-site review of programs, and programs must meet all standards prior to approval. Local pre-k applicants submit a budget based on local need during the initial RFP process. Pre-k providers submit continuation proposals annually that include a cost of living increase. The amount of the increase is the same for all pre-k providers and is provided to them by the state.

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

Programs are eligible for start-up funding, which may include funding for supplies and materials, as well as supports to achieve accreditation. While not limited to the pre-k program, Oregon also offers early childhood education providers a professional development program called CARES, which is similar to the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Project.

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

All pre-k providers are required to have salary scales that reflect appropriate salaries for specific categories of staff. While this does not guarantee pay equity with the public schools, it does promote comparable wages across programs.

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?

No, not in the pre-k regulations. However, the state has a designated funding source to provide child care contracts to state pre-k and federal Head Start programs to provide wraparound services so families receive seamless, full-day, full-year care.

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

The pre-k program provides the same comprehensive support services that Head Start provides. These include: addressing children's nutritional, health, and mental needs; providing opportunities to include parents in the development of the program's curriculum and approach to child development and education; and providing medical, dental, nutrition, and mental health education programs for program staff, parents, and families. Pre-k program family services staff often help families with referrals and provide information about available community resources.

Transportation is an allowable use of pre-k funds, but programs are not required to provide transportation. Many programs own their own buses or contract with schools or other organizations to provide transportation.

Funding

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

For the 2001-03 biennium, the average per-child payment was \$7,716. The cost per child varies across the state depending on the documented needs of the local pre-k providers.

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

Pre-k programs can receive a full-day child care subsidy rate in addition to their pre-k allocation. The state set aside \$1.9 million (in 2002) in child care contracts specifically to provide wraparound services for children in state pre-k and federal Head Start programs.

For Head Start programs, pre-k funds must be used to establish and maintain new or expanded pre-kindergarten programs, and cannot be used to supplant federally supported Head Start slots.

Sources

- Interview: Dell Ford, 09/24/2004. 503-378-3600 x 2601
- Website: <http://www.ode.state.or.us/search/results/?id=41>
- Legislation: <http://www.leg.state.or.us/ors/329.html>
- Administrative Rules:
http://arcweb.sos.state.or.us/rules/OARS_500/OAR_581/581_019.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.