



# Missouri

## *Missouri Preschool Project*

Missouri awards funds for the Missouri Preschool Project (MPP) through a competitive grant process with revenue from riverboat gaming fees. Most programs are open to all children, although some target children from low-income families or those with disabilities. The Missouri program is unique in that it requires grantees to set aside 10 percent of their grant to support the professional development of those licensed child care programs within the school district that did not receive MPP funding.

### **Eligibility**

**Income:** most programs are open to all children regardless of income

**Age:** 3 or 4 years old by August 1

**Priority:** locally determined; some programs give priority to low-income or special needs children

### **Length of Program**

**Hours/day:** locally determined, but most are six and a half hours per day (the minimum is three hours per day); programs are required to operate five days per week

**Days/year:** locally determined; a minimum of nine months per year

### **Eligible Providers**

Public school districts, government agencies, private preschool, Head Start, YMCA, United Way, other licensed child care programs, family child care group homes; religious entities are not eligible

### **Number Served<sup>1</sup>**

4,844 (2002-03): 1,694 3-year-olds; 3,150 4-year-olds

### **Total Annual Budget**

\$10,744,988 (2002-03) from riverboat gaming fees

### **Monitoring**

All programs must have a child care license. Moving on Together (MoT) provides monitoring and technical assistance. MoT rates programs using the ECERS and conducts site visits based on program needs.

---

<sup>1</sup> 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 state statute authorizes integration into community-based settings, but does not mandate it. The Invitation for Bid explicitly permits community-based, non-school settings to apply directly to the state to operate the MPP program. Programs must create a Community Advisory Committee and conduct a community needs assessment. The program guidelines instruct programs to submit plans that “reflect the results of the community needs assessment rather than an ‘opportunistic’ approach to securing materials, equipment, etc.”

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

When MPP was established, the state convened an advisory group that included representatives from the education, child care, and higher education agencies and communities. This group no longer exists, but revisions to the MPP guidelines may cause a reconvening of the advisory group.

At the local level, programs must convene a Community Advisory Committee that includes the following members: Preschool/Child Care Providers; Preschool Parents; Head Start; Social Services; Local Board of Education; Health/Mental Health; Church/Ministerial Alliance; Civic Service Groups; Senior Citizens; County Extension Staff; Caring Communities/Community Partnerships; College/University Personnel; School Personnel (including Kindergarten/Preschool Teachers, Administrator, Parents as Teachers, Special Education, and Title I Staff); PTA/PTO; and DHSS Licensing Representative. This group will help create a community needs assessment, which provides information on what kinds of preschool services are needed for age-eligible children in the community. These results must be used in determining how the MPP program will be designed to best meet the needs of the preschool children in the community.

MPP programs must set aside 10 percent of their grant to support the professional development of those licensed child care programs within the school district that did not receive MPP funding (see below).

## Procedures and Supports for Community-based Providers

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

Any existing early childhood program can apply for MPP funds. Every licensed child care program, school district, and college/university receives notification of the availability of MPP funds through a special mailing.

There is a formal Invitation for Bid process. Potential contractors submit bids to the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. There is no on-site review of programs prior to approval, and some program standards may be phased in.

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

Ten percent of MPP funds must be set aside to build the capacity of early education programs in the surrounding area. Funds support professional development opportunities, such as accreditation fees, training, college tuition, and curriculum training. This funding is restricted to licensed early education programs within the school district boundaries, and cannot be used by the MPP program for its own professional development needs.

MPP funds expand the T.E.A.C.H. Missouri program, and give priority given to MPP teachers.

Programs may apply for a maximum of \$30,000 in start up funds, which can be used for minor remodeling associated with licensing requirements.

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

Wages and benefits for MPP teachers in school or community-based settings “must be commensurate with other professionals and nonprofessionals in similar positions. Certified teachers must receive a teaching contract and be placed on a salary schedule similar to Title I preschool teachers or early childhood special educators. Non-public preschool programs should receive the same salary as similar programs in the community.” Programs must submit itemized budgets that show salaries.

## 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. However, as part of the community needs assessment, the Community Advisory Committee determines the need for full-day services in the community and makes a recommendation as to the length of the program day.

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

Programs may provide wraparound child care services using other funding sources, as determined by the community needs assessment. A small portion of programs provided by school districts do offer transportation, but this is not an allowable use of MPP funds.

## Funding

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

Contract awards are not made on a per-child basis. The funding formula includes multiple variables, such as the number of children served (in increments of 10), staff credentials, operating schedule, and the number of years of previous funding. For example, a program serving at least 10 children, full day, with non-certified staff receives a maximum of \$45,000. The amount increases to \$65,000 with certified staff. For a program serving at least 20 children,

the maximums are \$57,500 and \$77,500 respectively. The funding amount provided to programs is not expected to cover the full cost of providing MPP; local program operators must create a funding plan that includes funding from a variety of sources including parent fees.

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

The state allocation is not enough to provide quality services so programs usually blend funds from several sources. MPP programs may receive the full-day child care subsidy rate for eligible children, and Head Start programs may apply for MPP funds to serve more children or enhance the Head Start day.

## Sources

- Interview: Jo Anne Ralston, Lana Brooks, 10/06/2004
- Legislation: Missouri Revised Statutes, Chapter 313, Licensed Gaming Activities, Section 313.835 (creates ECE fund which funds MPP program)  
<http://www.moga.state.mo.us/statutes/c300-399/3130000835.htm>
- Sub-contracting requirements: Also in the IFB.

**Additional websites:**

- Program evaluation report summaries:  
<http://www.missouri.edu/~cfprwww/HB1519ExecSum.pdf>
- Department of Social Services, Early Childhood Resources:  
<http://www.dss.mo.gov/cd/early/index.htm>
- Probable state regulations, 5 CSR 50-270 (major content is referenced but not included):  
<http://www.sos.mo.gov/adrules/csr/current/5csr/5c50-270.pdf>

For information about national trends, read *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](http://www.clasp.org/publications/all_together_now.pdf).