

PRESCHOOL DEVELOPMENT GRANT BIRTH THROUGH FIVE (PDG B-5)

Last updated: January 2026

Created as part of the bipartisan Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) in 2015, the Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five (PDG B-5) program is a competitive federal grant that supports states and territories in improving existing early childhood systems and creating effective mixed-delivery models. The inclusion of PDG B-5 in ESSA marked the first time that Congress dedicated specific funds to promote high-quality early childhood education in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Administered through the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) in consultation with the Department of Education (ED), PDG B-5 grants support state efforts to enhance program quality, expand access, and increase efficiency through better collaboration and coordination.

EMPOWERING STATES

PDG B-5 represents a unique opportunity for the federal government to leverage the central role of states in coordinating early childhood systems and advancing quality. The program empowers states to strengthen the effectiveness and efficiency of existing early learning programs by better aligning services and reducing fragmentation and overlap. PDG B-5 grantees are specifically asked to:

- Better align existing programs;
- Engage parents and families by maximizing parental choice;
- Build on the success of existing programs through the dissemination of best practices;
- Foster partnerships among key stakeholders and programs; and
- Consider how to use monitoring and data for continuous improvement of programs and systems.

OVERWHELMING INTEREST

There has been strong and sustained interest in the PDG B-5 program. To date, 49 of the 50 states, Washington, DC, and four territories have participated, and most have applied for multiple rounds of funding to address targeted early childhood needs using this flexible funding source.

From 2018 through 2024, states and territories could apply for one-year Planning Grants followed by three-year Renewal Grants. Beginning with the first awards in

AT-A-GLANCE

CREATED

2015

WHO THIS PROGRAM SERVES

Grants are available to all 56 states, commonwealths, and territories to support early childhood services for children from birth through age five.

HOW IT WORKS

There are three types of grants: Planning Grants, Renewal Grants, and Systems-Building Grants.

- **Planning Grants** are one-year awards that support grantees in conducting comprehensive needs assessments and developing strategic plans.
- **Renewal Grants** are three-year awards available to states that previously received Planning Grants and wish to implement their strategic plans. Planning and Renewal Grants were awarded from 2018 to 2024.
- **Systems-Building Grants** are one-year awards that also support needs assessments and strategic planning, but with a stronger focus on maximizing parent choice, expanding access through mixed-delivery systems, and improving coordination, efficiency, and quality across early childhood systems. These grants were first awarded in 2025.

GRANTEES IN STATES/TERRITORIES

Since the program's inception, **73** initial Planning Grants, **60** Renewal Grants, and **23** Systems-Building Grants have been awarded. The renewal grantees design their implementation models with the promise of three years of federal funding.



Click or scan for a state-by-state overview of PDG B-5 awards over time.

FY 2025 FEDERAL FUNDING

\$315 million

December 2018, 46 applicants received Planning Grants, followed by an additional six in December 2019. All 46 original recipients applied for Renewal Grants, but HHS was only able to award 20 due to limited funding. Competition has remained intense in subsequent funding rounds, underscoring the continued demand for the program. In 2025, with all but 11 states and territories eligible for new awards, HHS announced a new one-year Systems-Building Grant opportunity.

Ongoing interest in PDG B-5 is illustrated in the timeline below and in FFYF's [PDG B-5 Participation Over Time](#) map.¹ Governors nationwide have demonstrated bipartisan support for the program by committing to a 30 percent state match to federal funding. Read what governors across the country have said about these critical investments [here](#).²

TIMELINE OF PDG B-5 GRANTS

- **2015:** PDG B-5 established through the bipartisan Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)
- **2018:** 46 states/territories received Planning Grants
- **2019:** 6 additional states/territories received Planning Grants and 20 states were awarded 3-year Renewal Grants
- **2020:** 8 additional states/territories that completed their initial Planning Grants were awarded Renewal Grants
- **2022:** 21 states received new Planning Grants and 21 states received Renewal Grants
- **2024:** 10 states and DC received Renewal Grants
- **2025:** 23 states awarded new 1-year Systems-Building Grants

FY 2025 GRANT CYCLE

In FY 2025, Congress appropriated \$315 million for the PDG B-5 program. Approximately \$87 million supported 10 states and Washington, DC, as they completed the second year of their three-year Renewal Grants. In November 2025, HHS announced a new funding opportunity using the remaining \$223 million in FY 2025 funds. All 45 states and territories not currently in the midst of Renewal Grants were eligible to apply for one-year Systems-Building Grants. Similar to the earlier Planning Grants, these awards provide one year of funding for states and territories to conduct needs assessments and develop strategic plans. However, the Systems-Building Grants place a more explicit emphasis on targeting investments to expand parent choice and understanding of the mixed-delivery system, improve efficiency through the sharing of best practices among providers, and enhance overall program quality. HHS awarded 23 Systems-Building Grants ranging from approximately \$1.4 million to \$14.7 million each.

PROGRAM IMPACT

In 2025, ACF released an updated [report](#) to Congress highlighting PDG B-5 grant progress and accomplishments, demonstrating how states have used funding to enhance their early care and education systems.³ Many states reported that the needs assessments conducted with their Planning Grants were the first comprehensive efforts of this kind. The process allowed states the opportunity to work across agencies and programs, engage multiple partners, and bring in new perspectives. Additionally, states have leveraged PDG B-5 funding for a range of activities to meet their specific needs. Select examples from the report include:

- **Delaware:** Created nearly 600 new slots for infants, toddlers, and preschool-aged children.
- **Louisiana:** Funded the state's EC Guides program, which supports families in finding, applying for, and enrolling in quality early childhood programs. The grant also supported Health Navigators, which connected over 1,000 early childhood educators with health benefits, improving workforce stability.
- **Nebraska:** Provided a training program to teach family child care providers the small business fundamentals necessary to achieve profitable, sustainable, quality child care, while also providing support to attain licensure, use business and marketing tools, and procure liability insurance.
- **Virginia:** Improved coordination of resources to both early childhood providers and families through the creation of the Early Childhood Navigator role, which is targeted to geographic areas that are child care deserts.

THE FUTURE OF PDG B-5

Through PDG B-5, the federal government supports state investments and initiatives to align and grow their early learning systems. Ongoing federal funding is necessary for states and territories to continue to build and improve effective mixed-delivery systems.

¹ FFYF, [Mapping PDG B-5 Participation Over Time](#)

² FFYF, "Governors Show Support for Federal Preschool Development Grant B-5 Funding," First Five Years Fund, June 23, 2025.

³ Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, [Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five \(PDG B-5\) Report to Congress: 2023 Activities](#), January 2025.