Overview of Early Childhood Funding Sources

Below are descriptions for available local, state, and federal funding that can be used to support early childhood care and education. These descriptions may help LEAs understand how they can maximize funding locally to serve as many children as possible within their community.

Cecil J. Picard Early Childhood Program (LA 4): This is Louisiana's primary state-funded preschool program which serves more than 16,000 children. LA 4 provides economically disadvantaged children with early childhood education during a six-hour-a-day program. LA 4 is available to all districts that apply, and currently offered in most of Louisiana's parishes, several charter schools, one tribal school, and through diverse delivery partnerships with Type III child care centers. This funding source is a combination of state funds and TANF federal funds which has specific reporting and reimbursement requirements.

- **Eligibility:** Children who are four years old by September 30 and whose household income falls at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level are eligible to attend the program.
- **How to Determine the Number of Seats to Request:** Requests should reflect family demand for seats. Seats are awarded based on the number of children they anticipate serving during the school year and the availability of funds. Four year olds of families who meet the income requirements are eligible to attend the program. Children from families with higher incomes can attend pre-K but must be funded using locally provided funds or paying tuition on a sliding scale up to the cost of care.
- **Application:** Seats are requested by the lead agency of the early childhood community network via the Coordinated Funding Request. Interested LEAs and centers must work with their community's lead agency to request funding.
- **Payment:** Payments are calculated based on the number of children attending 74% of the scheduled school calendar days in a month. Based on October Child Count enrollment for the 6-hour instructional program, funds may be reallocated if the program does not fill 95% of their allocated number of slots. Districts serving more than their allocated number of students may be awarded additional funds in the event funds are available.
- **Resource: [2019-2020 LA 4 Reporting and Payment Requirements](#)**

Nonpublic School Early Childhood Development (NSECD): Implemented with the goal of reimbursing preschool tuition for enrolled children from low-income families, the Nonpublic Schools Early Childhood Development (NSECD) Program provides pre-K programming to more than 1,300 four year olds from low-income families. Children in the NSECD program receive full day pre-K in BESE-approved nonpublic schools and child care centers.

- **Eligibility:** Children who are four years old by September 30 and whose household income falls at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level are eligible to attend the program. Eligible providers for NSECD are nonpublic schools and Type III child care centers.
- **How to Determine the Number of Seats to Request:** Requests should reflect family demand for seats. Seat allocations are awarded based on several factors including the number of children they anticipate having the capacity to serve during the school year and community need.
- **Application:** Interested BESE-approved nonpublic schools and Type III child care centers must work with their community's lead agency to request funding.
- **Payment:** Monthly payments are calculated based on the number of children attending 74% of the scheduled school calendar days in a month.

The Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP): CCAP provides low-income households with access to quality, affordable child care that allows them to continue working or receiving an education. CCAP funds full day care, before care, after care, and summer or holiday care in both licensed and license-exempt settings.

- **Eligibility:** To be eligible for CCAP, children under must be under 13 or under 18 with a disability, all adults in the household must be working or attending a school or training program for at least 20 hours a week, and household monthly gross income must fall at or below 55% of the state median income.
- **Waiting List:** Exceptions to the waiting list apply for children in families currently receiving child care assistance, children who are experiencing homelessness, children of families participating in the Strategies to Empower People Program (STEP) or Early Head Start Child Care Partnerships, children in foster care, or children requiring special needs care.
- **Application:** Families should apply online via the **CAFE' Portal.** Providers who are interested in becoming certified to accept CCAP payments should apply online via the **CAFE' Provider Portal.**
- **Resource: Louisiana Child Care Assistance Program**

8(G) Louisiana Quality Education Support Fund: Since its inception, the 8(g) fund has assisted schools and districts statewide, enabling them to provide better educational opportunities for all of Louisiana's children. The 8(g) Block Grant Program, administered by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, provides funding for specific focus areas, including pre-K programs for at-risk four year olds (High-Quality Early Childhood). Public school districts can use these funds to offer pre-K programs to children eligible by income or developmentally unprepared status.

- **Eligibility:** Four year olds who are at risk of being "developmentally unprepared" or at risk of being insufficiently ready for the regular school program, based on screening results, economically disadvantaged (200% FPL or below), and children who are not enrolled in any other publicly-funded pre-K program.
- **How Funding is Determined:** Based on a per-pupil allocation, eligible systems and schools receive block grant funding according to enrollment figures from the previous year. BESE requests that agencies attempt to fill 8(g) program spaces with 70 percent economically disadvantaged four year olds and 30 percent "developmentally unprepared." If the agency is already serving all economically disadvantaged four year olds with another funding source, then 100 percent of the children served should be "developmentally unprepared."
- **Resource: 8(g) Grants Program** and **LDOE Developmental Screenings Guidebook**

Title I Part A: Title I Part A funds, which are allocated directly to LEAs, can be used to fund high-quality preschool programs and support children birth through five. Such a program is designed to prepare eligible children with the prerequisite skills and dispositions for learning that will enable them to benefit from later school experiences.

- **Eligibility:** All preschool age children residing in the attendance area of the school are eligible to attend the program. LEAs are required to prioritize children most at-risk of failing to meet the state's academic achievement standards based on multiple, educationally related objective criteria.
- **How to Determine the Amount of Funding to Request:** Collaboration between the LEA fiscal authority and lead agency, whether it is a part of the school district or different agency, should determine the best way to maximize Title I dollars, which may include requesting Title I Preschool set-aside funds.
- **Application:** Districts will continue to request set-aside funds for Title I Preschool through Super App process.
- **Resource: Serving Preschool Children Through Title I Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 Non-Regulatory Guidance**

IDEA: Individual with Disabilities Education Act: IDEA, Part B, 619 provides funding to support children with disabilities aged three through five, inclusive, and to support two-year-old children with disabilities who will turn 3 during the school year so they can be provided a free appropriate public education. This includes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for further education. Part C of the IDEA (also known as the Early Disabilities Intervention Program for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities) provides (IDEA Part grants to States to serve infants and toddlers (ages birth through two years) who have developmental delays or have been diagnosed with a physical or mental condition that may result in developmental delays.

- **Eligibility Part B 619:** Children ages three through five who have been identified with disabilities and two-year-old children who will turn three during the school year. These funds may be used only to provide services to students within the specific age constraints and who have been identified as "children with disabilities" in accordance with IDEA, Part B 619 federal requirements.
- **Eligibility Part C 619:** Infants and toddlers (ages birth through two years) who have developmental delays or have been diagnosed with a physical or mental condition that may result in developmental delays and have an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP).
- **How Funding is Determined:** Districts receive an allocation based on the number of IDEA eligible children served in both self contained and reverse mainstream classrooms.
- **Resource: IDEA Website**

Head Start and Early Head Start: Head Start is a federal program that supports the school readiness of children ages three through five from low-income families through comprehensive preschool programming and specialized family services. Many Head Starts agencies also provide Early Head Start, which serves birth through two, and pregnant women who have incomes below the federal poverty level.

- **Eligibility:** Children ages birth through five whose families income is at or below the poverty guidelines are eligible. Children from homeless families, receiving public assistance such as TANF or SSI, and children in foster care are also eligible. Also, Head Start/Early Head Start grantees use a Community Needs Assessment done every five years to establish selection criteria and recruit families. This assessment also establishes criteria for accepting over-income children consistent with the specific needs identified within each community.
- **Resource: [Louisiana Head Start](#) and [Head Start Directory](#)**

Rural Education Achievement Program (REAP): The Rural Education and Achievement Program, Title VI, Part B, provides financial assistance to meet the unique needs of rural school districts and to assist them in meeting their academic achievement goals. Designed to help rural districts that lack the personnel and resources to compete effectively for federal competitive grants and that often receive grant allocations in amounts that are too small to be effective in meeting their intended purposes. Applicants do not compete but rather are entitled to funds if they meet basic eligibility requirements.

- **Eligibility:** Eligibility is regulated by community population density or daily school attendance served by the LEA, and LEAs must be designated rural by the U.S. Department of Education.
- **How Funding is Determined:** Funding eligibility is restricted by statute and awarded annually to eligible LEAs on a formula basis.
- **Resource: [Rural Education Achievement Program](#)**

Education Excellence Fund (EEF): In 1999, the Louisiana State Legislature created the Millennium Trust to provide to distribute the proceeds from the tobacco settlement. At the same time, the Education Excellence Fund (EEF) was created as a component of the Millennium Trust. The Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) is responsible for providing the appropriations and oversight of this fund purpose of ensuring that all expenditures are used to support "excellence in educational practice."

- **Eligibility:** The Department distributes funds to eligible local education agencies based on student enrollment:
  - 85% of the appropriation is distributed to local school systems and charter schools based on the number of students in the most recent Minimum Foundation Program (MFP) Budget Letter.
  - 15% of the appropriation is distributed to approved non-public schools based on the number of students as reported for the previous school year.
- **How Funding is Determined:** LEA will annually prepare and submit to the LDOE a prioritized plan for the expenditure of funds it expects to receive in the coming year from EEF, which may include early childhood education programs focused on enhancing the preparation of at-risk children for school. This plan will include performance expectations that ensure accountability in the expenditures. Must be approved by the Department and by the appropriate standing committees of the legislature.
- **Resource: [Education Excellence Fund](#)**

Appendix: Funding Sources

Local Taxes: Districts use local dollars like sales taxes, property taxes and set asides to increase access to pre-K seats to families who may be over income or children who don't meet the age requirement for publicly-funded pre-K. This significantly reduces the financial burden facing families with young children and helps ensure that children enter Kindergarten ready to learn.

- **Eligibility:** Eligibility of children funded with local dollars is determined by the LEA.
- **Resource**: **Systems Building Resource Guide Chapter 7: Financing Strategically,** ACF

Private Funds: There are a variety of funding strategies that can bring in private dollars including student scholarships, social impact bond programs, family tuition, local businesses, philanthropic investors, local governing bodies, private investors and charity organizations. Finding other potential funding sources might be the missing piece for a comprehensive funding portfolio for early childhood care and education in the community. Each community will need to research to find the best fit for private funding for early childhood care and education.

- **Eligibility:** The eligibility of students is typically determined by the community partnership with the funder/donor. The community network and funder will typically collaborate to create an eligibility policy using local funding sources for early childhood care and education.
- **Resource**: **Systems Building Resource Guide Chapter 7: Financing Strategically,** ACF