



Early Childhood Education (ECE) Fund

Local and State Match Funds Planning Document 2025-2026

Overview:

Community Network Lead Agencies receiving Early Childhood Education Fund State Match for locally-generated community dollars, which are designated to expand the number of early childhood care and education quality seats, must complete and return this “Local & State Match Funds Planning Document” to earlychildhood@la.gov prior to budget approval for state matching dollars in eGMS. **This document is due back to the LDOE by no later than August 29, 2025, by close of business.** Lead agencies can expect feedback on the planning document within two weeks of submission to the LDOE.

Please note that lead agencies should allow two weeks for Department feedback after submitting the planning document to the LDOE and that they should receive that feedback from the Department prior to entering their ECE Fund budgets into eGMS. Networks should plan their submission of the completed planning document accordingly. The eGMS application opens in June 2025, though funds will not be available until the 2025-2026 state fiscal year.

I. Administration Preparation

The following questions will help assist the Community Network Lead Agency in planning for the distribution of funds. These questions will also provide insight to program managers at the Department, so they can provide ongoing technical assistance and support throughout the year. These questions should prepare the Network for the ongoing administrative needs of this work. Please answer to the best of the Network’s ability at this time, and whenever applicable provide an estimated date by which the Network will have an answer, if one is not clear at this time.

Please answer the following questions to support the Network’s budgeting process:

1. At what rate(s) will the Network pay centers for seats? Please note that the Network can differentiate rates between age groups, which is recommended by the LDOE to be in alignment with the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP).

Please type in the yearly or monthly rate the Local Network intends to pay centers by age group for one child. **Please note that these rates must be at no cost to families for full-time care (at least 6 continuous hours per day, 5 days per week).**

Age	Total Estimated Allocation (per Child by Age)	Yearly/Monthly/or Daily (Please Specify) Rate Per Child
Infant		
Toddler		
3-year-old		

2. How did the Network decide the rate(s)? For example, please include any communication with participating providers, comparative rates, or other logic that resulted in the selected rate(s).

3. How many Local and State Match seats does the Network propose to add with this funding? Please identify the age groups for each number of new seats the Network proposes to add.

Local Funding Seats		State Match Funding Seats		Seats Funded by Both Local and State Funds	
Age	Approximate Number of Seats	Age	Approximate Number of Seats	Age	Approximate Number of Seats
Infant					
Toddler					
3 year old					

4. What additional quality initiatives or measures, if any, will the Network support with this funding? (e.g., professional development, teacher stipends, etc.) *Please note that no more than 30% of the State Match Funds can be used on administrative responsibilities, quality efforts, and indirect costs.*

5. Networks will be asked to take attendance for Local and State Match seats and submit that information monthly, on the 10th of the subsequent month, in alignment with LA 4 and NSECD. Please describe below how the Network will collect attendance at the provider-level from participating centers to verify and submit official attendance to the LDOE. Please note that the LDOE is not implementing an attendance requirement for families, and tracking attendance is purely for data collection purposes at this time.

If the Network lead agency chooses to implement an attendance requirement for families, please indicate that in this section.

6. What concerns does the Network have regarding filling seats in a timely manner? Does the Network anticipate being able to enroll at least **90% of the local and state match fund seats by September 30, 2025?**

II. Eligibility Preparations

Please note the following eligibility requirements for Local and State Match funding:

- Local funding eligibility can be partially set by the Community Network Lead Agency. However, there must be a minimum requirement of “economically disadvantaged” as defined in Title 28, Part 1, Chapter 11 of the [Louisiana Administrative Code](#).¹
 - State match funding awarded must be used to fund slots for children who are eligible for the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP). Please review the [CCAP eligibility requirements](#).
1. What will be the Network's particular eligibility requirements for the Locally-funded seats? The Network should consider whether the Network might want to establish any of the following eligibility requirements:
- Income threshold [please note that only those children whose family income makes them economically disadvantaged², as defined in Title 28, Part I, Chapter 11 of the Louisiana Administrative Code, shall be eligible for the early childhood care and education quality seats outlined in the applicant's proposal]
 - Categorical eligibility (e.g., children in foster care)
 - Work or school requirements
 - Child-age requirements, if more restrictive than B-3
 - Participation or membership in a particular community (e.g., parents who are also students at a local university, front-line workers for COVID-19 response or disaster response, children of military personnel)
 - Others (please explicitly state, if any)

¹ Children with the following characteristics are considered *economically disadvantaged*: eligible for food assistance program, disaster food assistance program, TANF, Medicaid, or reduced price meals or children who are English learners, homeless, or in foster care.

2. What, if any, additional eligibility parameters will the Network will set, and how do these parameters support the Network’s goal to serve any particular high-need group(s) in the community identified in Question 1 above? If the Network has no additional parameters for eligibility for Local Funds, please write “N/A.”

3. How will the Network structure the internal eligibility determination process based upon the eligibility requirements outlined in Question 3 above? The Network should consider the following questions, as they are helpful to the Network:

- Who on the team will review applications?
- Who on the team will communicate with families to inform them about enrollment decisions?
- How long will the staff have to make a determination?
- What documents does the staff need to create or want LDOE support in creating, to ensure a smooth eligibility determination process?
- How long will the Network give families to turn in eligibility documents?
- How will the Network maintain eligibility documents?
- How will the Network redetermine eligibility for families who were previously deemed eligible after the 24 month period of eligibility?
- What documentation will the Network provide to families to share their enrollment decision?

(Please see [this sample letter template](#) that the Network can download and use or edit as needed.)

4. For Past Participants Only: What was the result of Statewide Monitoring for the 2024-2025 year?
- ☐ No Findings
- ☐ Eligibility Findings

If the Network received eligibility findings by Statewide Monitoring and was asked to implement a Corrective Action Plan, what additional support does the Network need from the LDOE to implement the Corrective Action Plan and improve in 2025-2026?

III. Participating Providers and Proposed Requirements

Participating providers must have:

- 2023-2024 Performance Profile score of Proficient or above
 - Type III licensure and CCAP certification, or be an FCC in Academic Approval
 - Open infant classrooms (site may use ECE Fund monies to open infant classrooms)
1. What additional criteria will the Network set for centers to be recipients of these seats?
(Please note, participating centers must have a Performance Profile rating of at least Proficient and at least one classroom with children aged 15 months or younger. This question is asking whether the Network will have additional criteria beyond that minimum requirement.)

2. What process will the Network utilize to select participating centers, and how will the Network communicate that process to program partners?
(For example, Networks may choose to create a detailed application for all licensed providers in the Network to complete within an established time frame and communicate to those providers through Ready Start Network meetings, school board meetings, or other established communication methods.)

- Please list the centers, their license numbers, site code, and most recent Performance Profile Rating, where Local and State Match seats will be placed, so that the Department can create and distribute attendance trackers to the Network. If the Network is not yet prepared to submit these providers and their license numbers, please provide the date by which the Network will know that information and email sonia.fields-gutierrez@la.gov when those decisions are made. **Please include any sites that *might* have seats enrolled throughout the year. Though adjustments may be made, it is preferred to have all possible sites included in the initial build of the Attendance Trackers.**

Please add additional sites as a separate Excel or Google Sheet file for additional sites.

Provider Name	License Number	Site Code	2023-2024 Performance Profile Rating (Excellent, High Proficient, Proficient)	Estimated Number of Total Seats to be Placed at Site

IV. Budget

Include the Network's budget for both the Local funding and the State Match funding. The table below is provided to facilitate the entry of the Network's budget into eGMS. Please write the budget descriptions as if entering them into eGMS. This way the LDOE can provide clear feedback so that when the Network is ready to enter the actual budget in eGMS, the approval process can move forward more swiftly.

The following are requirements and questions to consider when creating the ECE Fund budget; not all questions will be applicable to every Network:

- ***At least 70% of funds must be used for directly funding seats, ensuring that these seats are provided at no cost to families.***
- ***Remaining funding (up to 30% of funds) may be used for costs associated with funding the project (such as improving quality and paying for audit costs required per §909 of Chapter 9 of Bulletin 140)***

<u>Budget Category</u> <i>(Linked Document for Budget Code Reference)</i>	Description of Activity	Estimated Local Funds Amount	Estimated State Match Funds Amount
100			
200			
300			
500			
600			
800			
Indirect Costs <i>(rate is already established)</i>			

V. Partnership Agreement

Attach and submit a draft of the partnership agreement the Network plans to enter into with all participating centers. The agreement below is an example; **the Network shall modify this agreement or create/use its own partnership agreement**, detailing the responsibilities of the Community Network Lead Agency, and the Community Network Lead Agency should confer with their internal business office, legal team, and other stakeholders prior to sharing with program partners.

SAMPLE

Child care center _____ (name of site) agrees to partner with _____ (Network) for the allocation of locally-funded and match-funded seats starting on _____ (date) through _____ (date). We agree to work together towards providing high-quality child care and education to the children of Louisiana, and to do this we will:

- ☐ Meet all of the Local and Match Seats program requirements, including:
 - ☐ offering infant care in my center,
 - ☐ ensuring the lead teacher in classrooms with Local and Match-funded slots has an early childhood ancillary certificate; and
 - ☐ ensuring that Local and Match-funded seats are offered free of cost to families who meet the eligibility requirements.
- ☐ Offer care to Local and Match enrolled children, aiming for the approximate number of _____ to _____ children. I understand that due to family needs, my allocation number and age groups may fluctuate throughout the year, and I am willing to do what is necessary to meet the community needs.
- ☐ Attend recurring meetings on a _____(weekly/biweekly/monthly) basis (via Zoom or in person at _____ location) to discuss operational/logistical matters in effectively implementing the B-3 seats
- ☐ Participate in _____ (hours) of early child care professional development OR Participate in _____(specific Early Childcare professional development sessions, maybe through Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies)
- ☐ Take daily attendance for Local and Match-funded seats and submit by _____ (daily time deadline)
- ☐ Conduct _____ (number) weekly informal observations of all teachers/classrooms with B-3 seats and take action with aim of increasing quality of all classrooms serving B-3 children
- ☐ Participate in _____(number) of informal or formal observations per month of all teachers/classrooms with Local and Match-funded seats by Ready Start Network
- ☐ Receive and act upon feedback based on unified quality rating system rubric and guidance
- ☐ All purchases for curriculum, tools, supplies, or other classroom supports that impact classrooms with Local Match seats will be discussed with and approved by the Ready Start Network _____ prior to purchase.
- ☐ Receive _____ (dollar amount) to be used exclusively for the creation and improvement of Local and Match-funded seats within the center. <The Network can be more prescriptive on how specific dollar amounts will be used to what purpose here as appropriate for the agency/center relationship.>
- ☐ Determine, in coordination with Ready Start Network staffing, employment responsibilities. <The Network can be more prescriptive on how specific dollar amounts will be used to what purpose here as appropriate for the agency/center relationship.>
- ☐ Agree that the Ready Start Network RSN has the right to remove children and funding from _____ (center) at any point during the year if the RSN Ready Start Network finds that _____(center) is out of compliance with any of the listed agreement requirements, or in violation of any requirements listed within Bulletin 137.
- ☐ <Add other requirements for partnership as needed or desired between agency and child care center.>

Both parties agree to uphold the qualifications listed herein.

Signed by:

Community Network Lead Agency

Date

Child Care Center Director

Date