

Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts 2021 Request for Application Frequently Asked Questions

Application Process (AP)

AP-1: When completing the letter of intent, can you tell me where it says “We intend to serve: _____ # of children,” do I put in the Total number of slots we want including what we HAVE plus the number requesting? Or do we put just the number we are requesting in ADDITION to what we have?

This RFA is for expansion slots ONLY. Please do not include any info about current slots. Only include the number of EXPANSION slots you are requesting.

AP-2: What if we do not have an eGrants account or number?

A processed Letter of Intent (LOI) will assure you have access to the application within the eGrants system.

AP-3: Should you only be requesting the number of slots allocated for your county or can you request more slots if it is with in the unmet need? For example: If the county I am writing for has only has 10 slots allocated to them, but the unmet need for the county is 100. Is it possible that that county will be awarded more than 10 slots?

There is no cap on the number of slots you may request.

AP-4: When will we be able to start the application?

Once a completed Letter of Intent (LOI) is received and processed, the application will open in the eGrants system for the applying agency on the LOI.

AP-5: The LOI states: On behalf of (Lead Agency) we intend to apply... If I join a current grantee, do I write their name as Lead Agency, or write the name of our center because we're joining the current grantee?

The LOI and the Letter of Commitment are distinct documents. The LOI should be completed only by the lead agency applying for funding. The Letter of Commitment is part of the application if the lead agency is applying with partners. Each partner agency would complete the Letter of Commitment as part of the submitted application.

AP-6: What did you say about the minimum number of slots that an agency can apply for?

There is no minimum or maximum number of slots for which an agency can apply.

AP-7: If I apply solo at this time with a letter of intent; can I later change the application to join a lead agency that is currently funded? If I join a current grantee with multiple partners, will I complete the application, or the current grantee complete the application on my behalf?

In this scenario it would be suggested that you submit a lead agency application and join as a partner in the application of the other lead agency. Most lead agencies do not add partners after the application process is completed.

AP-8: Will I need 3 different AUN numbers since I have a multiple site. Two sites are on under the same entity and the other site has its own entity.

It depends on how you plan to submit your application(s). If you want to submit one application, you could pick which legal entity would be lead and use that AUN, and the other entities, if they had their own tax ID, could be listed as partners in the application OR each legal entity (with separate Tax Id and AUNs) could each submit an individual application.

AP-9: Is it possible to increase the number that was written on the Letter of Intent during the grant writing process? For example, from 18 students to 36 students? Please see application guidance page p. 6: Letter of Intent.

AP-10: Do we use the legal entity MPI or the location MPI in the General information section?

The 7 or 9-digit MPI of the legal entity is what will be entered in the General Information section.

AP-11: I have aligned all pertinent components to apply for PKC as a third-party entity. Today I had the opportunity to speak with the ELN helpdesk and was told that I would submit all zeros in place of the MPI number. I wanted to confirm that this would be acceptable.

Yes.

AP-12: One of our partners is not interested in requesting any additional slots. Should they complete the Letter of Commitment and fill in "0", or should they not complete the Letter of Commitment for this RFA?

If an existing partner does not want to serve/partner in this expansion grant then they should not be listed as a partner. Please remember this is for expansion slots only and not combined with existing slots.

AP-13: If I am applying as a single grantee with 2 locations am I submitting the whole \$ grant amount request for both buildings in the general info section?

Yes. The full grant amount (all locations) should be included in your grant request.

AP-14: Can a childcare center apply as a Lead Agency and sign a partnership contract with a third-party entity that is applying for the first time and go with the agency that is awarded the grant or do you have to choose one or the other by June 30th?

There is no restriction on an agency applying for the grant as both its own lead agency and as a partnering agency with another applicant. If this is done we do ask the agency to include information on the partner letter of commitment indicating they are applying as both a lead and a partner and the actual capacity to serve PKC students at the agency location.

AP-15: We believe we have submitted the Pre-K Counts Expansion grant on eGrants but are confused as the application says "in process" instead of "submitted". Are you able to guide me in knowing if our application has been submitted? If not, do you know who I can contact to determine if our application has been submitted?

Please check the "workflow step" status. This can be found in the upper right hand corner of the grant application. Upon submission the "workflow step" status will change to "submitted for peer review". The overall status will still show "In Process" since the grant is in process for peer review. Please contact Winnie Richards at winnrichard@pa.gov if you have submission questions.

AP-16: "I did not complete any items on the right side of the grant: Funding and Accountability. Does anything need completed on that portion? Is the reporting guidelines and administrative function sections a section that is completed by agencies after they are awarded the grant?"

This is completed if a new applicant is awarded the grant. Instructions will be sent to all newly awarded grantees including next steps about updating their grant application, funding accountability and transparency data, signoff contract options, etc. Applicants do not need to complete the "administrative function" section. This is completed by the eGrants system. The "reporting and guidelines" sections will have parts that newly awarded grantees will need to complete for the contracting process. This would be included in next steps instructions for all newly awarded applicants.

AP-17: When completing the Pre-K Counts Expansion Application in eGrants, are we only submitting information for the added classroom or for the entire program (including the added classroom)?

Please only submit new or added slots/programs/classrooms you are proposing. Existing slots/classrooms should not be included. This grant is for expansion slots/classrooms only.

AP-18: Can you please let me know if I have to submit a resolution for E-signature?

This is not required to submit initially. However, we encourage programs to apply for it so if approved for the grant and eSignature is approved the grant process can be expedited.

AP-19: I am inquiring about how to get a Resolution template if that exists, to create an E-Signature. Can you send to me, point me in the direction of, or provide additional guidance on how I can provide an acceptable e-signature form? I am under the impression that since our agency is not a School District, Intermediate Unit, or Community Agency with a school board, that I am required to send a hard copy signature? Is this correct.

Please refer to Appendix D: eGrants electronic signature p. 39 and Appendix E: Resolution p.41. A signature is not needed to initially submit the grant. This would be used later if approved for the grant. Next steps will be sent to approved agencies including information about contracts and signatures.

Scoring (SC)

SC-1: If you are a current grantee with multiple partners, but are only requesting expansion slots for a few partners; Will points be awarded based on the # of partners you have total, or will it be based only on those partners requesting expansion slots?

Scoring will be based on the partners related to the expansion slots ONLY. Only those partners should be entered into the application.

SC-2: Is it a better chance to receive funds if we partner with a current grantee?

Each submitted application will be scored using the rubric provided. Current grantees do receive priority points in this application.

Eligibility (E)

E-1: Are there additional regulations surrounding applying as a third-party entity?

No. The PA PKC Statute, Regulations, and Guidance document contains all the program regulations and policies.

E-2: I'm a group child care provider and I am interested in participating in PKC. I already participate in Phlprek how would that work? It's only a part time program so will I be able participate in both programs.

If you are a group child care designated at a STAR 3 or 4 you are eligible to apply for a PKC grant. A half day PKC program would need to operate for at least 2.5 hours of instructional time.

E-3: If the private academic school is a partner, but only has a PDE license for K thru 5 what would this partner be defined as? A Third Party?

They couldn't be a partner because partner agencies directly serve children and MUST meet one of the 4 direct service provider types. Third Party ONLY applies to the grant applicant who wants to serve as a fiduciary agent.

E-4: Can a Schedule C/1040 individual be apart of the PKC grant or do they need to be a LLC?

If the agency meets one of the eligible providers type to apply that are eligible to apply for PKC funding. Eligible provider types can be found on p. 6 of the application guidance.

E-5: We heard on the application webinar that you must have centers/locations that are 3 Stars and above. We have two locations that meet this criteria. We wanted to see clarification on the statement that we can provide the Pre-K Counts programs at other locations along with these sites. We have a center that has 2 Stars currently and we would like to also apply for a program to be held there along with the other 2 locations. Is this possible?

All locations serving PKC funded children must be a STAR 3 or 4 **before** they can serve PKC funded children. You could apply, but the locations that aren't yet STAR 3 or 4 would have to become STAR 3 or 4 **before** they could serve PKC funded children.

Proposed Service Area, Locations, and Risk Score Calculations (PLR)

PLR-1: Does a chart need to be completed for sites where we are adding slots to an existing location?

Yes.

PLR-2: If I own three child care centers, but each is a separate corporation with a different Tax ID number, can I make one center the lead agent and partner with the other centers? In this scenario, I would also have other partners, not connected to me legally through ownership.

Yes.

PLR-3: If I am the lead agent, do the partners have to have a STAR 3 or greater? Or can that be something they are working on or close to achieving?

At least one of the partnering agencies PKC locations would need to meet the eligibility requirements of the grant at time of application. If the partner has multiple locations, the other locations could be working toward eligibility.

PLR-4: In completing the "Locations" sheet it is asking for the MPI number along with the 4-digit location identifier. We are proposing 2 new locations. Being that we don't have an identifying location number for each of the 2 proposed locations, what 4-digit number should be entered?

Page 13 of the application guidance provides information on the MPI number. If you are proposing new locations, we ask that you contact the ELN help desk to assure these locations do not already have an assigned MPI number. If they do not, the ELN help desk will advise you to enter all zeros for the four digit extender. If funding is awarded, then the locations will be provided a location MPI.

PLR-5: The school district that I am including in my grant had a Pre K Counts grant in the past. So they would have MPI numbers. I have my lead agency number but need to know if I enter the location as 0000 or use their old location extension. I have that number to use if I need it.

If your agency will be operating the classroom the first 9 digits of the MPI should align with your agency MPI and the last 4 digits will be assigned by ELN for the new location. If the school district is operating the classroom as a partnering agency then their MPI would be used. The best course of action is to verify the location with the ELN help desk.

PLR-6: Some time ago one of you recommended a Governor's website or somewhere else that I could access program reach data that is more recent than the latest Reach and Risk Assessment (2016-2017). Can you refresh my memory on where I can find that information?

[Pre-K Counts and Head Start Supplemental Assistance Program Funded Slots FY 2014-Current Quarterly County Education | PA Open Data Portal](#) and [Early Learning Dashboards \(pa.gov\)](#).

Partnerships (P)

P-1: Do partners need to have an allocation of PKC funds to be consider a partner?

Yes. A partner for PKC is defined as a legal entity which receives pass thru funding to operate a PKC location.

P-2: Is there a list of current grantees so that we could perhaps partner with a current grantee?

[GeneralAssemblyReportFY19.20FINAL.pdf \(pcdn.co\)](#)

P-3: Is funding less when in a partnership?

All terms should be negotiated between the lead and partner agencies in the required partnership agreement.

P-4: Is it possible to partner with PKC grantees not in your county?

Yes.

P-5: Can I apply as a lead agency on my own without partnerships? Is it more likely for me to serve families in my community if I join a current grantee?

If you are an eligible agency, then yes, however, partnerships are prioritized in this grant application.

P-6: It seems most points are granted for collaborative efforts and therefore I have a greater chance of success if I join a current grantee?

Partnerships receive priority points as part of this application process.

P-7: If we are applying separate from our current lead agency, and are denied, can we continue to offer the program with their partnership?

Partnerships are negotiated between the lead agency and the partner agency. OCDEL cannot comment on the status of the current partnership continuing.

P-8: We are working with a local district that is interested in providing us space in their building for a PKC classroom this upcoming fall. The question I have is that they asked if it would be possible to only enroll district students in the classroom? All of the children would still have to meet all of the PKC eligibility requirements but anyone outside the district would not be able to be enrolled. Is this possible? We use a point system for selecting students to determine who is at greater need. Would we just give extra points to those students that live in the district?

First, the district location would need to meet provider type eligibility. Just because the location is in a school district building does not make it a school district location. The location itself would need to meet the same provider type eligibility that the applying agency holds. You could also decide to partner with the district (pass funds through) then the district would need to operate the classroom (hire the teachers). An agency can add "lives within district boundaries" to their prioritization strategy to provide more points to children who reside in the district. You cannot be exclusive regarding which families complete a PKC application---Any age or income eligible child must be able to complete an application for PKC services, however through this specific prioritization you could assure district children are prioritized for enrollment.

P-9: Is it possible for a provider to partner with other agencies to offer PreK Counts (request 10 slots) and also be a Lead Agency (request 10 slots)?

Yes. The lead agency can provide direct services at their locations AND pass thru funds to partnering agencies who are also providing direct services at their locations.

P-10: Can the lead agency provide direct services at their location AND receive pass thru funds from partnering with another agency?

Yes. An agency can have their own PKC grant (lead agency) and serve as a partner under another PKC grant held by a different lead agency.

P-11: If partnering with a private academic school with a license for K thru 5 would this be listed under PDE Private Academic School Nursery School?

No, the Private Academic License must specifically say "nursery" under the age groups listed.

P-12: Can a partnership be between two child care agencies?

Yes, partnership is defined as one agency serving as lead passing funding through other agencies (partners) so that the partners can operate classrooms.

P-13: In 405.32. Partnerships it states an agreement between the two partners must have a signed partnership agreement. The agreement shall be submitted to and approved by the Department. Who is the department OCDEL? We have multiple partnerships, but I don't believe we needed anything approved prior to our Pre-K grants submitted is this just the partner letter of commitment?

PK Program Specialist reviews your partnerships agreements as part of your annual monitoring on behalf of the Department of Education (specifically OCDEL). You do not need the partnership agreement until AFTER funding is awarded.

P-14: The PA Pre-K Counts Statute, Regulations and Guidance 405.32 Partnerships refers to an entity that includes more than a rental agreement. Would a district who is providing transportation, meals, space, parent activities, staff and supplies for supplemental curriculum, some materials and furniture (library, art, gross motor, etc.) but not the in class daily educational services be a partner?

If the district does not "operate" the classroom, i.e. provide the salary for the lead teacher for the PKC classroom, then this would not be considered a partnership. In this case the classroom location, even if within a school district, would need to be meet the provider type of the agency who is providing the salary for the lead teacher.

P-15: Our legal entity has two locations that will be applying for the grant ... does that mean we are a partner?

It depends. If the locations have the same tax ID and 9-digit MPI as the applying legal entities, then they are considered locations under the applying legal entity (not partners). If the locations have different tax ID and 9-digit MPIs, then you would need to set up the grant as a partnership with these separate legal entities.

Collaborations (C)

C-1: Should collaboration with EHS also be uploaded?

Yes.

C-2: What is the level of engagement expected for collaboration with other PKC/HS providers?

See application guidance pp. 21-22 and regulations document p. 13 and p. 16.

Staffing (S)

S-1: What if you find a teacher and they have a provisional certificate from Dept of Ed can they be placed on the application while they are obtaining the certificate? If so, how long do they have to get the certificate?

The staffing requirement is Instruction certificate in either N-3 or PK-4.

S-2: Can a teacher with higher levels of education be considered for a PKC teaching position or must they hold a teaching certificate?

The staffing requirement is Instruction certificate in either N-3 or PK-4.

S-3: Do the teachers have to hold a degree in early childhood education as I read somewhere, or can they have a degree in another field?

The staffing requirement is Instruction certificate in either N-3 or PK-4.

S-4: Can they hold a private license certification in early childhood?

The staffing requirement is Instruction certificate in either N-3 or PK-4.

S-5: Can a teacher who has a master's degree in ECE, but is currently enrolled in a certification program be assigned as a Lead Teacher?

Technically, they could serve as a long-term substitute for 90 days but after that if they didn't meet the PKC teacher qualifications then the program would take a point deduction on the Program Review Instrument (PRI).

S-6: What happens if a teacher resigns, and we cannot fill that teaching vacancy right away? Who will be able to teach in that position until a replacement is found? Is there a 90-day substitute rule?

This is covered in the PKC Regulation and Guidance document on p. 24-25.

Program Requirements (PR)

PR-1: Do we use our own needs assessment tool?

Yes.

PR-2: Regarding the screening programs used, are there specific program we are required to use?

Please review the Statute, Regulations, and Guidance document for the requirements related to screening.

PR-3: Our preschool offers several full day and half day options (listed below). We have half day students enrolled 3 days a week, and half day students enrolled 5 days a week. All of these students receive a minimum of 2.5 hours of instruction on the days they attend school. Can we include in our application half day slots for those that attend half day 3 days per week as well as the students that attend half day 5 days per week?

PA PKC must be offered full day (5 hours) or half day (2.5 hours) 5 days per week. Children enrolled in PA PKC must attend 5 days per week.

PR-4: Can a director of a Star 3 facility work in a dual capacity as director and certified lead teacher if the facility has a capacity of 40?

Although not explicitly disallowed in the PKC regulations, this is not recommended as the lead teacher needs to provide the 5 hours of instructional time (FD) or 2.5 hours of instructional time (HD), and cannot be pulled out of the classroom to fulfill other duties (such as those of director). In addition, the PKC regulations build upon the requirements for the eligible provider type so this would need to be allowed by those requirements as well.

PR-5: If I provided a classroom of 17 kids, can I do that with one teacher and the aid?

Please reference Regulation § 405.43. Class Size and Student/Staffing Ratio p.21 of the PKC Statute, regulations, and guidelines document for more information.

Fiscal (F)

F-1: As a third-party pass through, is there a specific process as to how to budget funds to cover what administrative services they provide?

No. Administrative services provided by a lead agency to their partners should be negotiated as part of the partnership agreement, and this negotiation should include agreed upon funding.

F-2: Could you tell me if the grant funds can be used to pay the salary of the teacher and teacher assistant in the PKC classroom?

Yes, teacher salaries are an allowable program expense.

F-3: Are there additional costs like the PELICAN system, teacher training, etc. that the District will need to pay for to run the program?

Please fully review the Statute, Regulations, and Guidance document for all program requirements. All program requirements must be met. PKC funds may be used to meet the program requirements.

F-4: Are transportation costs included in the grant or are those expenses covered by the District?

Transportation of PKC-funded students is an allowable grant expense.

F-5: Could you please let me know the maximum \$ amount per child (we are seeking 16 slots) we may seek to create the budget? Also, what is the % admin fee withheld?

The cost per child is covered on page 14 of the application guidance. Budgets are created at the grantee level using the [fiscal supplement](#). *Any admin dollars must be directly related to PKC services.*

F-6: If you have multiple partners does eGrants split up each amount of slots per budgeted partner area? Or is it the lead agency to split up each individual partners budget?

The narrative section of the application will ask you to split your partner info including how many slots and how much funding will go to each partner. Then in the budget section, as the lead your full pass through amount (amount to all partners) will be one line item and you will need to also submit a separate, uploaded partner budget for **each** partner agency.

F-7: I am now at the budget part of the application, does all of the categories under the Budget category have to be filled out? I see somethings that wouldn't apply.

If a line item does not apply to the PA Pre-K Counts grant you do not need to add it to the line item budget. Please only add line items that you are proposing to use if awarded the grant. Please refer to the PKC [fiscal supplement](#) for more information about specific line items.

F-8: Can one person, do more than one position? For example, can my director also be paid for preparing the food?

This can be found on p. 2 under Line Item Notes in the PA Pre-K counts Fiscal Supplement- Staff should only appear one time on the budget, on the line item that reflects their primary role.

If working in multiple capacities and allocating funds for those, include this additional cost allocation in the description of their primary role.

F-9: Do I have to offer benefits? Myself and all other employees already have health benefits?

Include any amount of benefits being charged to the PA Pre-K Counts Grant for staff under Line Item 1. Please refer to the PKC [fiscal supplement](#) for more information about specific line items.

F-10: If employees opt out of benefits because they have health insurance, and it is allotted in budget what happens to those funds?

The program is responsible for development and implementation of the program budget. Funding for benefits could be included initially and, if not used, a budget revision could occur later in the program year to reallocate those funds to another line item. If it is excluded from the initial budget there would need to be clear justification on why it is being excluded so reviewers do not assume benefits just aren't being offered.

F-11: Both the Description & Justification is referred to in the fiscal supplement but only the Justification Section is present in the grant application. Please advise.

The Budget Justification is the description info and justification combined for the expansion grant application. This is due to limited spacing in the system. Please see p.27 of the PKC application guidance for more information about the budget detail and justification.

F-12: When will the first invoice be due to be submitted into e-grants system?

No invoicing occurs for this program and fiscal accounting is not handled through the eGrants system. Grantees will use the PELICAN and FAI systems for fiscal reporting including cash on hand reports (FAI) and quarterly expenditures (PELICAN).

F-13: What date will the first financial reimbursement be paid to providers?

This will depend on when contracts are finalized. A definitive date cannot be provided at this time.

F-14: Since PKC funding is done through Pelican, is invoicing and payments, MONTHLY?

Yes.

F-15: What time frame after the 1st day of our PKC program start, are we allowed to invoice (monthly, quarterly, or what other interval). I am trying to Budget for the possibility of being awarded grant funding slots.is program. (Ex: If PKC class starts 9/8/2021, what would be the date of invoicing, and what would be date of payment for September 2021?)

There is not invoicing. All grants are placed on a system of scheduled payments to provide operating funds during the period of the Agreement. Monthly payments are determined by dividing the approved amount by the number of months during the term of the Agreement. Payments will be initiated by the Comptroller's Office after arrival of a fully executed Agreement. All payment terms are contingent on a signed and executed contract. We cannot provide an exact date for first payments at this time. If the contract is executed by the 5th of the month,

payments would begin during that month. After the 5th and payments wouldn't occur until the next month. It is likely for new grantees that fully executed contracts would not be in place until after the start of the typical program year. In this case, when the contract is fully executed, the first payment would include all monthly payments from July 1 through the month the contract was executed.

Miscellaneous (M)

M-1: What happens if we don't have the minimum number of students (17) in the class?

Programs receive funds on a cost per child basis. If you are awarded funds for 17 students and you don't have 17 enrolled, proportionate funding would need to be returned. If you want to apply for less than 17 PKC funded students, that is fine as well. There is not a "minimum: number of PKC students that need to be in a classroom.

M-2: Is the SAP# is that the same number as the AUN# or the vendor# received from the commonwealth system?

SAP# and vendor # are the same but an AUN is a different number. See page 6 of application guidance for information about AUN. See page 13 of the application guidance for information about the vendor or SAP number.

M-3: Is there any upcoming webinars that can help me better understand this program? The one listed on the PA Keys website wasn't available?

Review the [PA Pre-K Counts Statute, Regulations, and Guidelines](#) document.

M-4: I am inquiring about the necessity of a Community Needs Assessment (CNA) for PreKCounts grant application submission. Will our grant application be processed and considered without a current CNA?

The application does not ask for an upload of a needs assessment, however the information from a needs assessment should be used to complete the application. New applicants should use community needs assessments available to them when completing the application (eg district information, Head Start information). Current grantees applying are required to update their needs assessment annually and use that information in completing the application. All applicants are asked to respond to questions where they will need to understand the current prekindergarten landscape with the community where they are proposing to serve children.

M-5: I am looking for clarification on the Letter of Support for the PA PreK Counts RFA process. We are a Head Start agency, and I have been approached by another agency asking for our Letter of Support. Can you tell me - what should be in it? is there a template or form to use? Am I required to SUPPORT this or just ACKNOWLEDGE that someone else is applying.

The response depends upon whether you are partnering with this agency or if they asking about the collaboration section? If partnering there is a partner letter of commitment to complete. Partnering would mean they are passing funding to you to serve children. If they are asking to respond to the collaboration question. The question asks if you held a planning meeting and if there is a formal MOU/agreement in place with your agency. The goal of this is to assure that agencies applying are not competing with Head Start in their community. The question does not

ask for “letters of support” but for any formal agreements that are in place between the agencies.

M-6: If I request for 80 slots, and are awarded those, but can fulfill more slots in September, can I get more slots?

No. Once awarding is finalized funding would not be increased to include more slots.

M-7: If I request 80 slots and are awarded 80 slots, but only am able to actually fill 60 slots, will I be penalized, or will that dollar amount per slot not be paid to us.

You would only be funded for the actual amount of slots you could serve. The actual amount of slots to be served would have to be finalized at time of contracting.

M-8: Is there an exact date when we will actually sign a contract if awarded slots? July 1, July 15, July 30?

No definitive date can be provided at this time, however, once signed, contracts will be retroactive to July 1, 2021.

M-9: Can we change the number of slots requested after the application on June 30, 2021, after awarded slots?

You can make decreases to awarded funding and slots but not increases. Once a decrease is made, the funding and slots would be redistributed to other grantees and would not be available for returned to the grantee who reduced.

M-10: Is the current RFA PreK counts application process only for the 2021-2022 school year?

Yes, this application is for one year of funding with the potential for one year of continuation. A full competitive recompute process will occur in the Spring of 2023 for FY 2023-2024.

M-11: Do approved applicants have to apply every year for funding?

PKC grantees complete a continuation grant each year to continue their funding when within the 5-year cycle. If expansion funds are available within the 5-year cycle, applicants interested in expanding must apply. A full competitive rebid occurs every 5 years. This is when everyone has to reapply for funding.