

# Rhode Island Early Childhood Care and Education: Educator Pathway Planning Grants and Award *Overview and Guidance*

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*Application Due Date: June 4<sup>th</sup> 2021*



**RIDE** Rhode Island  
Department  
of Education

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# Introduction

High-quality Bachelor's degree and teacher certification programs have been proven to improve teacher practice and, subsequently, child outcomes. High-quality educator preparation programs ensure teachers and other professionals are grounded in the relevant, up-to-date information on teaching content and pedagogy, while also training teachers to use this information effectively in their classrooms. However, research on early childhood teacher preparation programs finds that there is great variability in the structure and quality nationwide and there is work to be done to revise early childhood teacher preparation programs to meet the needs of both pre-service and incumbent early childhood educator workforce (Gomez et al., 2015; Hyson et al., 2009; Whitebook, 2009; Whitebook et al., 2012).

In the State of Rhode Island, to achieve a high-quality rating (4 or 5 stars) on the state's Quality Rating and Improvement System (BrightStars), child care programs must employ workers with college credits in Early Childhood Education (ECE) and postsecondary degrees. In addition, childcare programs that seek to become a Rhode Island Pre-Kindergarten provider must employ Bachelor's degree and Pre-K-2 certified teachers to achieve Comprehensive Early Childhood Education (CECE) program quality approval (RI Board of Education, 2018). A lack of a trained workforce prevents childcare centers from moving up on the BrightStars continuum, qualifying to become a State Pre-K provider, and receiving CECE approval. Furthermore, with the implementation of tiered reimbursement in 2018, child care programs are reimbursed at higher rates for the Child Care Assistance Program with higher quality ratings. These higher reimbursement rates would allow programs to increase staff compensation.

Aligned with the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Strategic Plan for Rhode Island, the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) seeks to ensure the incumbent workforce of early childhood educators has accessible, high-quality, and meaningful pathways toward credential attainment, career advancement, and higher compensation.

## Purpose

The Educator Pathway Planning Grants are intended to fuel the initial planning and development stages of an education preparation program that will serve the unique needs of the current Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) workforce. The Rhode Island Department of Education

(RIDE) will award **\$5,000 planning grants** on a competitive basis to Institutes of Higher Education (IHEs) to support the development of a proposal for a **Bachelors with Pre-K-2 certification** and **Post-Baccalaureate Pre-K-2 certification pathway** for the incumbent workforce. If selected to receive a planning grant, the IHE will be responsible for:

- Demonstrating an institutional commitment to planning for educator preparation programs that are accessible to the target population
- Planning a proposal for **both** a Bachelors with Pre-K-2 certification pathway and Post-Baccalaureate Pre-K-2 certification pathway that will be submitted to RIDE as a deliverable at the end of the grant term
- Attending all meetings coordinated by RIDE to support awardees with achieving the goals of this planning grant (estimated meeting schedule below):
  - *End of June – Onboarding meeting (1.5 hours)*
  - *July & August – Program planning and design workshop(s) (2 – 2–3-hour meetings)*
  - *August – Final check-in (1 hour)*
- Notifying RIDE of any amendments made to the proposed budget with justification
- Committing to designing, executing, and sustaining an educator preparation program if selected for the Design Grant (see below).
  - *Note: The executing and sustaining of the program is dependent on program approval and the Prep-RI process*

## Design Grant

The Planning Grant awardees are to submit a deliverable in the form of a proposal for the aforementioned pathways at the end of the Planning Grant term, which will serve as an application for the Design Grant award (*see “Grant Deliverable” section below for more information*).

RIDE will award **\$125,000 to a single winning pathway proposal** through a Design Grant. The Design Grant awardee will be expected to engage in the robust development of the Bachelor’s with Pre-K-2 Certification and Post-Baccalaureate Pre-K-2 certification pathways that they proposed through the Planning Grant, apply for and receive RIDE Program Approval, and implement and sustain the pathways. ***Please see Appendix A at the end of this document for a tentative timeline for this project.***

## Target Population

The incumbent ECCE workforce of Lead Teachers and Assistant Teachers within Community-Based Organizations and Head Starts in Rhode Island is the target population that the pathways proposed through this grant will address. A Bachelor's Degree with Pre-K –2 Certification pathway is expected to serve teachers with Associate's degrees in the Early Childhood Education or related field, while the Post-Baccalaureate Pre-K-2 Certification Pathway is to serve teachers with Bachelor's degrees in Early Childhood Education or a related field. The target population consists of full-time employees that must retain their employment throughout the duration of the educator preparation program, require flexible or non-traditional learning opportunities, and need cost-effective tuition options and/or scholarship funding supports.

### *Rhode Island Workforce Data*

In 2019, the state released the [Rhode Island PDG B-5 Workforce Needs Assessment](#), a report that provided updated and comprehensive data about the characteristics of the current early childhood care and education workforce in the state. Data from the Workforce Needs Assessment identify the following conclusions:

- **Current Assistant Teachers do not have the requisite higher education to advance and become teachers in 4- or 5-star centers** (36% do not have 12 college credits, 60% do not have Associate's degrees, and 82% do not have Bachelor's degrees).
- **34% of all current lead teachers do not have a Bachelor's Degree**, making them ineligible to become Rhode Island Pre-K Lead Teachers
- **Of the 66% of Lead Teachers with Bachelor's degrees, only 43% have the Pre-K-2 teacher certification** required within 7 years of becoming a Rhode Island Pre-K teacher.

Rhode Island's existing preparation pathways leading to a Pre-K-2 credential are primarily designed for recent high school graduates, and do not incorporate the supports that are needed to help a working and mid-career educator with obtaining these credentials. The intention of the Planning Grant is to propose and potentially design pathways that are accessible to and supportive of the context of the incumbent ECCE workforce with gaining a Pre-K-2 credential.

# Application Process Information

## Grant Duration and Amount

The maximum grant size for an Educator Pathway Planning Grant is **\$5,000 per Institute of Higher Education**, with IHEs able to pool their money to partner from July 1, 2021 through September 3, 2021. This grant may be used for a variety of activities that support the planning and development of a proposal to the Rhode Island Department of Education for educator preparation programs that address the needs of the target population. RIDE anticipates awarding a maximum of 5 grants; the total number of grants awarded will be determined by the number of IHEs that apply and meet the criteria.

Grantees can request reimbursement using the financial status request and cash reimbursement form that can be accessed here: [Federally Funded Grant Forms \(forms for non-Accelegrants Programs\)](#). The form should be emailed to [Maureen.Major@ride.ri.gov](mailto:Maureen.Major@ride.ri.gov).

***\*\* All grant information, guidance, FAQ, and additional information can be found on the Early Childhood Education Workforce page on the RIDE website or accessed here: [ECCE Workforce Page](#).***

## Eligibility Requirements

The Educator Pathway Planning Grants will be offered only to IHEs that demonstrate interest and commitment to planning, and, if selected for the subsequent Design Grant, designing, and operating RIDE-approved early childhood teacher preparation programs.

IHEs may choose to partner with one another; therefore, joint applications for funds may be submitted. In this instance, the institutional leadership signature page of the application must be fully completed, identifying the personnel at each IHE that will have a role in the pathway planning process. Furthermore, each institution will be required to submit a separate FY22 budget sheet identifying the differential funding allocation between institutions.

## Application and Award Timeline

- ✓ **May 7, 2021:** ECCE Educator Pathway Planning Grant Application released
- ✓ **June 4, 2021:** Applications are due by 4:00 PM and should be electronically submitted to [RIPre-K@ride.ri.gov](mailto:RIPre-K@ride.ri.gov)
- ✓ **Week of June 14, 2021:** Planning Grant Award Notification
- ✓ **July 1, 2021:** Planning Grant Awards Disbursed
- ✓ **September 3, 2021:** Planning Grant Deliverable Due
- ✓ **September, 2021:** Design Grant Award Notification

*\*\*See Appendix A at the end of this document for a tentative timeline of this project*

## Grant Deliverable

Each grantee will be responsible for delivering a proposal to RIDE for the creation of a Bachelor's degree with Pre-K-2 certification and Post Baccalaureate Pre-K-2 certification pathway. Proposals must address the needs of the target population including, but not limited to:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| ✓ Accessible learning opportunities        | ✓ Employer engagement  |
| ✓ Flexible coursework sequencing           | ✓ Student teaching opportunities for the incumbent workforce |
| ✓ Program mentorship & wraparound supports | ✓ Pre-K through grade 2 field experience continuum           |
| ✓ Program sustainability                   | ✓ Articulation agreements                                    |

The pathway proposal deliverable will serve as an application for the Design Grant which will provide a single awardee greater funding and support for the design and execution of the planned pathways. As such, awardees will be expected to submit a narrative statement on adherence to the project timeline, and plan for spending the \$125,000 Design Grant funds within their Planning Grant deliverable.

**Deliverables are to be submitted to RIDE by September 3, 2021.** More information regarding the structure and submission of the deliverable will be made available by RIDE after the Planning Grant award designations are made.

*\*\*Please see Appendix A for a tentative timeline of the project and the “Purpose” section for more information regarding the Planning versus the Design Grant.*

## Submission Instructions

Applications must be submitted as a Word Document or PDF to [RIPre-K@ride.ri.gov](mailto:RIPre-K@ride.ri.gov) by 4:00 PM on Friday, June 4, 2021. At this time, applications will be distributed to the selection committee for review.

*Upon receipt, all Grant Applications shall become the property of the State without compensation to the proponent, for disposition or usage by the State at its discretion. The State assumes no responsibility or obligation to the proponent and will make no payment for any costs associated with the preparation or submission of any Grant Application.*

## Questions?

Please send questions in a Microsoft Word format and reference “ECCE Pathway Planning Grants” in the subject line to [RIPre-K@ride.ri.gov](mailto:RIPre-K@ride.ri.gov) by 4:00 PM on Monday, May 17th. Any questions received will be posted and answered on the RIDE website as an addendum to this solicitation by Wednesday, May 19th 2021.



## Appendix A: Tentative Project Timeline

Process	Date
Launch and awarding of Planning Grants (\$5,000)	May – July 1, 2021
Planning Grant deliverable due	September 3, 2021
Awarding of single Design Grant (\$125,000)	September, 2021
Program design & development	September 2021 – February 2022
Submit letter of intent and application for RIDE program approval	March 2022 - April 2022
Program finalization and recruitment	Fall 2022 – Summer 2023
Target start of program implementation	Fall 2023

**\*\*Note:** This project has identified a condensed timeline. If IHEs are able to submit an application for RIDE program approval by 1/31/22 and begin program implementation in fall, 2022, there may be additional funding sources available to support program implementation.

## Appendix B: Resources

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- Hyson, M., Tomlinson H., & Morris, C. (2009). Quality improvement in early childhood teacher education: Faculty perspectives and recommendations for the future. *Early Childhood Research & Practice*, 11(1).
- National Association for the Education of Young Children (2019). Professional Standards and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators. Retrieved from [http://www.naeyc.org/files/naeyc/files/2009%20Professional%20Prep%20stdsRevised%204\\_12.pdf](http://www.naeyc.org/files/naeyc/files/2009%20Professional%20Prep%20stdsRevised%204_12.pdf)
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- Rhode Island Department of Human Services (2019). Rhode Island PDG B-5 Workforce Needs Assessment Final Report. Retrieved from [PDG B-5 Workforce Needs Assessment Final Report 10-19.pdf \(ri.gov\)](PDG B-5 Workforce Needs Assessment Final Report 10-19.pdf (ri.gov))
- Whitebook, M., Austin, L., Ryan, S., Kipnis, F., Almaraz, M. & Sakai, L. (2012). By default or by design? Variations in higher education programs for early care and education teachers and their implications for research methodology, policy, and practice. Berkeley, CA: Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, Institute for Research on Labor and Employment, University of California at Berkeley. Retrieved from [http://www.irle.berkeley.edu/cscce/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/ByDefaultOrByDesign\\_FullReport\\_2012.pdf](http://www.irle.berkeley.edu/cscce/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/ByDefaultOrByDesign_FullReport_2012.pdf)
- Whitebook, M., Gomby, D., Bellm, D., Sakai, L., & Kipnis, F. (2009). *Effective teacher preparation in early care and education: Toward a comprehensive research agenda*. Part II of *Preparing teachers of young children: The current state of knowledge, and a blueprint for the future*. Berkeley, CA: Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, Institute for Research on Labor and Employment, University of California at Berkeley. Retrieved September 9, 2013 from [http://www.irle.berkeley.edu/cscce/wp-content/uploads/2009/01/teacher\\_prep\\_2.pdf](http://www.irle.berkeley.edu/cscce/wp-content/uploads/2009/01/teacher_prep_2.pdf)