

# **Great Start Collaborative**

## **Great Start Readiness Program Annual Endorsement Guidelines**

### **Background and Overview**

Legislation within the State School Aid Act requires that *“A district receiving funds under section 32d shall submit a preapplication, in a form and manner prescribed by the department, by a date specified by the department in the immediately preceding state fiscal year. The preapplication shall include a comprehensive needs assessment and community collaboration plan, which is endorsed by the local great start collaborative and is part of the community’s great start strategic plan that, includes, but is not limited to, great start readiness program and head start providers...”* The process for Competitive GSRPs, as designed by the Department, mirrors this requirement. These guidelines and the associated Endorsement Form are intended to support collaboration among Great Start Collaboratives (GSCs) and Formula (District/PSA) and Competitive (agency) Great Start Readiness Programs (GSRP).

GSCs were developed in 2006-2007. By 2009, all counties in Michigan were covered by GSCs. The overall purpose of a GSC is to create a single, interconnected, intertwined network of public and private programs, services, and supports, working together in a community to accomplish better results for young children and families. The GSC’s membership is comprised of public and private organizations, businesses, philanthropic organizations, parents of young children, and other key community leaders that serve young children and their families. All GSCs have developed comprehensive three-year strategic plans focused on the five Great Start components: pediatric and family health, social and emotional health, child care and early education, parenting leadership, and family support.

When implementing priorities identified in Great Start strategic plans, one role of GSCs is to assist agencies and organizations to leverage funds or services to support an identified community need. The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) funds GSRP grantees to implement quality preschool experiences for at-risk four-year-old children in Michigan. As part of GSRP funding requests, Formula grantees must assess community need through completion of the Community Needs and Resources Assessment (CNRA). It is legislatively required that Formula GSRPs submit CNRAs for endorsement and inclusion in Great Start strategic plans. Competitive GSRP applicants will also seek endorsement as part of the Department-designed grant application process.

### **Process Toward Endorsement**

A workgroup of MDE staff, Early Childhood Investment Corporation (ECIC) staff, the Head Start Collaboration Office Director and two GSC Directors

worked to develop a process to meet legislative requirements and enhance local collaboration and system building.

This document and associated technical assistance will outline the process for use in the FY 2011-2012 Formula CNRA and Competitive Application. Each GSC works to bring all providers into real collaboration. When a strong partnership is developed, the completion of the form is just the last step in a process in which the early childhood community has worked together to maximize preschool slots for the local area. Also attached is an Excel spreadsheet designed to allow each GSC to aggregate the CNRA information it receives to help in local review and discussion of proposed services.

### **Role/Responsibility of Each Formula Grantee\***

- Seek the endorsement from the local GSC to receive funding for services in FY 2012. The GSRP grantee is responsible for initiating this endorsement process and participating in the process with the local GSC.
- Contact the GSC and send the following documents by **February 1, 2011**:
  - GSC Endorsement Form found within the CNRA with the top section completed; and
  - completed Need and Capacity page from the CNRA.
- Be available to the GSC for questions, attend a GSC (or associated workgroup) meeting to discuss data across GSRP sites, etc.
- Submit the signed GSC Endorsement Form as an attachment to the Formula CNRA in the Michigan Electronic Grants System (MEGS). Grantees must submit this form to MDE no later than **March 15, 2011**.

**Note:** GSCs **cannot** require GSRP grantees to submit these documents prior to February 1. This allows adequate time for GSRP grantees to complete the documents.

### **Role/Responsibility of Each Competitive Grantee\***

Competitive Grantees will:

- Seek the endorsement from the local GSC to receive funding for services in FY 2012. The prospective GSRP grantee is responsible for initiating this endorsement process and participating in the process with the GSC.
- Contact the local GSC and send the following documents by **April 29, 2011**:
  - GSC Endorsement Form found within the application with the required sections completed; and
  - completed Need and Capacity page.
- Be available to the GSC for questions, attend a GSC (or associated workgroup) meeting to discuss data across GSRP sites, etc.
- Submit the signed GSC Endorsement Form with the Proposal Application by **May 25, 2011**.

## **Role/Responsibility of the GSC**

- Design the local GSC process for reviewing and endorsing Formula CNRAs and Competitive Proposal Applications. This may include the use of the GSC Aggregated Data Form (provided in Excel) if the GSC chooses to enter all data into one form to be able to see a complete picture across the service area.
- Receive need and capacity data and GSC Endorsement Forms from each prospective Competitive GSRP grantee by April 29, 2011.
- Implement local process for review and endorsement which may include requesting changes to the data to reflect corrections.
- Request coordination with regional early care and learning efforts (this cannot be required in order to give the endorsement). (Example: a community may need additional School-Day slots but the grantee is proposing all Part-Day slots. The group may ask for an explanation of the GSRP grantee's choice, but cannot require a change in the program model the grantee will offer in order to give the endorsement.)
- Sign each GSC Endorsement Form and return it to the appropriate GSRP grantee by **May 18, 2011**. It is recommended the GSC scan and e-mail the signed form in order to assist with submission to MDE.

## **GSC Endorsement Form Descriptions**

As outlined above, the GSC must complete the attached Endorsement Form for each grantee and check one of three levels as defined below. The GSC should select the level that best describes both the CNRA and the collaborative effort made by the grantee.

**REVIEW:** The GSC has reviewed the CNRA. This designation acknowledges the GSC's awareness of the CNRA, but does not comment on the CNRA's accuracy and plan for the provision of GSRP by the grantee. This designation may be used when the prospective GSRP grantee provides insufficient time for review of the proposal.

**NOTICE OF SUPPORT:** The GSC has reviewed the proposal and is in support of MDE funding, but only the most basic levels of collaboration have been established (networking, coordinating and/or cooperating). The GSC would "support" a GSRP that meets the needs of the local community (e.g., program option, transportation, etc.).

**ENDORSEMENT:** The GSC assures the proposal builds the program/service capacity needed in the community and is part of an integrated delivery system. The GSC "endorses" a prospective GSRP grantee that partners with the GSC in strategic efforts to provide high-quality preschool, fostering school readiness and life success for children residing within the GSC region. An endorsed GSRP applicant is or agrees to be an active participant in the Community Needs and Resources Assessment, data analysis, and ongoing improvement efforts.

*While there are no immediate consequences for a GSRP grantee if a designation less than ENDORSEMENT is selected, it is expected that all GSRP grantees will work toward this designation by the next funding cycle.*

Once received, each GSRP grantee will upload its completed GSC Endorsement Form into the Formula CNRA in MEGS, or Competitive Application and submit to MDE.

*\* The term "grantee," as used in this document, refers to a Formula grantee that is applying for a new year of funding, a Competitive grantee that is moving to year two or three of the three-year cycle, and to an agency competing to become a grantee.*