

Michigan Even Start Coordinator's Mini-Conference
Kellogg Hotel and Conference Center
May 4-5, 2011

Questions and Answers

General

Q – Is there money at MDE to continue to support Even Start after the funding ends June 30, 2011?

A – Governor Snyder's plan announced an upcoming Executive Order that would create an "Office of Great Start – Early Childhood." A number of programs were named as part of the office, but Even Start was not. Until the actual Executive Order is issued, we don't know how to plan; however, the feds expect us to do all of the work and report on everything we have always been expected to do. MDE may have a little administrative money to continue to support this program.

Q – What money does the U.S. Department of Education (USED) have to support this program for the extended period of time?

A – At the April federal meeting, Melvin Graham (our state contact) said that to the extent possible, they will continue to do state monitoring as in their plan—on-site monitoring, self-assessment, and desk monitoring. This year Michigan is due for a desk monitor. USED has identified administrative funds to continue to monitor Even Start.

Q – What is the state of adult education in Michigan?

A – All budgets for state government passed the House yesterday. The Senate hasn't passed any budgets. Reneé suggests checking online in the approved budgets as soon as they are posted.

Q - Will TTA services still be available to continuing programs?

A – Yes, but services may be a little different.

Q – Will the Blackboard continue?

A – Absolutely!

Extension/Expansion/Elimination Requirements

Q – What are the expectations of the programs as we extend past June 30?

A – An Even Start program must be provided—all four components and all 15 elements.

Q – If programs are operating for an extended period using current grant money, can they propose any modifications to their current application plan?

A - Yes, fill out the Status and Changes table of the application forms. Update only those categories where there will be a change.

Q – If I am extending and I think I can run the whole program the way it is until August, and then plan to ask for expansion through December 31, how do I fill out the form?

A - Look at the entire extension/expansion period (July 1 through December 31) as a whole. MDE will view the extension and expansion as one.

Q - If our plan is to end in June and file reports July 22, do we need to request an extension?

A – This depends on what funds you'll be using. If you are paying out with Even Start funds, you have to extend the period. If you're finishing on or before June 30 and all you have to do beyond June 30 is file reports, and you don't have to pay anyone to submit the report, you wouldn't need to ask for an extended period of obligation.

NOTE: Please make sure your business office enters the Final Expenditure Report (FER) in MEGS **before** going into CMS. If the reports are not done in this order, the FER will be returned for modification. If CMS is done first, the budget detail is not pulled into the FER and we don't get the detail we need.

Q – If select staff remain to complete the reports, do they have to be paid by Even Start or can the district/agency pay for them? Will we have to apply for an extended period of obligation?

A – No, they do not need to be paid by Even Start. You may not need to ask for an extended period of obligation (see above question).

Q – Is it possible to change partners after June 30?

A –No, programs cannot request an extension (or extra money) with a new partner as the money will be an enhancement to the current award; however, if there are extenuating circumstances (i.e., partner went out of business), it may be negotiated.

Q – Is it possible to work with fewer families?

A – Yes, provide information in the proposed change area in the application forms. Rationale should be provided if there is a drastic change.

Q – If I have 15 ESL families and 15 GED students and decide to serve only ESL families, I will need to drop TABE. Is that an approvable change?

A – If the program stays within parameters, this change is ok.

Q – If the age-range focus becomes more narrow (e.g., from 0-8 to 0-3), where would this be addressed?

A – It would be addressed in the targeted population section of the application forms.

Q - If I want to apply for expansion, how much money can I ask for?

A – It is estimated MDE will have around \$140,000, so that would be the limit.

Q – How will reports work if we stretch a few months?

A – Assessments still need to be done. Decisions still need to be made regarding what data will be requested in the interim and final data reports, or if an interim data report will even be required.

Q – Since the enhancement is to the current 2010-2011 grant, how long will the money last?

A – Funds may be requested for a period of time ending before/on August 31, 2012.

Q – If my program has collaborators and Even Start funds are only needed to support home visits, is that ok?

A – Yes. As long as the program model does not change, you can use funds to support just one component or one program element only if collaborations cover the other three components and the other 14 elements.

Q – Can we structure our options after June 30 in phases?

A – This may be possible. In describing the changes in the application forms, you need to be specific about anticipated funds, timelines, and all elements provided. What must be kept in mind is what funds you're asking for from Even Start. If you continue with an enhanced request, you must continue to do Even Start. If you anticipate amending your project, MDE must be notified first.

Important-- Are you asking for an expansion to delay an end or are you asking for money to solidify a sustainability plan? Programs need to be intentional about the future of their program.

Q – If you're going to ask for expansion funds, is there still the matching requirement?

A – Yes, there must be an additional local contribution for the expansion funds. A waiver may be requested. If a program already has an approved waiver, it would need to be revised.

Q – Have the rules changed about shutting a program down since 2005?

A – The rules haven't changed. MDE's attention to the detail of the rules has changed. This is a new process because Reneé wanted to honor the work programs have done in their communities.

Q - When do we submit budget information?

A - The forms required to be submitted by June 1 do not include a budget. Prior to June 15, MDE will make a decision on which programs receive enhanced funding. The pieces done in MEGS will be due by June 15. Once enhanced allocations are loaded into MEGS by MDE, programs will need to revise the budget. If you're only asking for an extended period of obligation, you might need to do an amendment to your budget, but do not do this until MDE has entered the extended date.

Q – When will we know if we've been approved for an expansion?

A – Our goal is to review applications as soon as possible and let everyone know our decision by June 15. If programs know what they are going to do, they are encouraged to submit the forms ASAP. All programs need to submit a form no matter what decisions have been made around closure, extension, and expansion.

Q – What exactly is due June 1?

A - The paperwork due June 1 is strictly the E3 paperwork that tells MDE what you propose to do and how much money you are requesting.

Q – How do we submit the application?

A – You may submit the forms via email as soon as they are completed; however, a signed original and one copy must be submitted as well.

Local Evaluations

Q – Are programs to use their current outside evaluator or could they use a peer evaluator? Could a TTA consultant be the peer evaluator?

A – A peer may be considered as an “outside” evaluator. Programs can provide a stipend and mileage to them. The law says the evaluation has to be an independent evaluation; therefore, a TTA consultant may be a peer evaluator as long as they have not served as that program’s “mentor.”

MDE and Carolyn will discuss further whether the TTA project has the funds to pay for the evaluations and for TTA consultants to do site visits, etc. If your program anticipates using a TTA consultant for the evaluation, enter in your status form that you propose to participate in whatever decision is made at the state level and no additional costs would be incurred.

Q – What do we do if we want to continue with our current evaluator?

A - If you want to continue with your current evaluator, put that in your continuation plan. Also make sure you tell your TTA consultant.

Q – Which year’s evaluation would be covered in my 2010-2011 budget?

A – Your 2010-2011 budget would cover the report that provides evaluation of July 1, 2010 through June 30, 2011 programming and is due no later than November 1, 2011.

Q – Is there information in legislation that gives a definition of independent evaluator?

A – Evaluators are not defined in Statute, but in Guidance. The Guidance states that the evaluator must be independent and someone who would be objective. That’s why we suggested not using your mentor.

Disposal of Equipment, Supplies and Materials

Q – What do programs do with “used” materials and supplies (i.e., text books, toys, etc.), not equipment, valued at \$5,000 or greater (depreciated amount)?

A – These items should be dispersed in any way that makes sense—hopefully not to landfill. Think about donating them to your collaborators and partners.

Q – If I have “unused” materials and supplies, what should I do with them?

A – If these items are still in boxes and you add up the value of these unused, unopened items, and that amount is greater than \$5,000, they should be distributed to a program that has previously or is currently supported with federal funds. Each program must complete the “Michigan Even Start Equipment and Supplies Disposal Certification” form which is posted at www.michigan.gov/evenstart within 60 days of the end of the period of obligation.

Q – How do I report “used” equipment? Does used equipment still need to be listed on the form as to what federal program received it?

A – Information about what federal program received the used equipment must be provided on the certification form. Remember, equipment is defined as one single item valued at \$5,000 or more, no matter what policy a local business office has adopted.