
Great Start Collaborative (GSC) Endorsement Guidelines Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP) Funding Application

Background and Overview

Legislation within the State School Aid Act requires that *"An eligible applicant receiving funds under section 32d shall submit an application, in a form and manner prescribed by the department, by a date specified by the department in the immediately preceding state fiscal year. The application shall include a comprehensive needs assessment using aggregated data from the applicant's entire service area and a community collaboration plan that 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..."* These guidelines and the associated Endorsement Form are intended to support collaboration among Great Start Collaboratives (GSCs), Intermediate School Districts (ISDs) as GSRP grantees and those who deliver the program.

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 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 identified community need for the grant. Through ISDs, the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) funds local school districts, Public School Academies (PSA), for-profit and not-for-profit community agencies to implement quality preschool experiences for eligible four-year-old children in Michigan. ISDs are required to award 30% of slots allocated to the ISD to community-based agencies.

Process toward Endorsement

Each GSC works to bring all providers into true collaboration. When a strong partnership is developed, the completion of the form by the ECC is just the last step in a process in which the early childhood community has worked together to maximize preschool funding for the local area.

Responsibility of the ISD

- Collect data for the ISD's catchment area;

- Work with current partners to determine their capacity for the upcoming grant year, if awarded funding;
- Discussion with representatives from each subrecipient and the GSC about data on poverty, number of eligible, resident children, existing preschool programming and efforts to strengthen capacity to meet the local need;
- Work with the GSC director and the local School Readiness Advisory Committee (or Area-wide Advisory Committee for this year) to analyze the needs of the area as well as potential sites and new partners to serve as additional GSRP subrecipients;
- Create a process that is reviewed by the School Readiness Advisory Committee (or Area-wide Advisory Committee for this year) and provided to the GSC to award slots to current and new subrecipients that is fair and reasonable. The process must address each of the requirements in the *ISD Administration of GSRP* section (see #5 and #14 under "Strategic Planning") of the GSRP Implementation Manual.
- Seek the endorsement from the full GSC to receive funding for services in the upcoming fiscal year.
- Complete the *Confirmation of Assurances* screen upon release of the Funding Application in MEGS+ for the upcoming grant year and place the document on file. It will be required at the time of an audit of GSRP and if the audit shows that the GSC has only indicated review rather than endorsement, a monitoring citation will require a compliance plan and the potential for future follow-up.

Responsibility of the GSC

- Work with the ISD through the local School Readiness Advisory Committee;
- Implement the local process for review and endorsement by the full GSC board;
- See that the GSC Endorsement Form is signed and returned to the ISD Early Childhood Contact.

GSC Endorsement Form Descriptions

As outlined above, the GSC must complete the Endorsement Form for the ISD and check one of two levels as defined below. The GSC should select the level that best describes both the Need and Capacity and the collaborative efforts made by the ISD.

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

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" the ISD 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.