Philadelphia Early Learning Instructional Excellence Initiative-*Curriculum Fund*

Applications Questions

How do I submit my application?

Applications must be submitted via an online application portal that will be available from December 11th, 2023 until January 19th, 2024, 11:59PM. The portal will be accessible through the [PHMC Curriculum Fund website](). Once you begin your application, you will have the ability to save and continue your progress via a unique weblink provided to you. Once all application questions have been completed and your attachments added, you will be able to submit your application. The legal entity contact listed in the application will receive an email to confirm your application has been received.

What needs to be submitted for an application to be considered complete?

Applications are considered complete when **all** sections have been **fully** answered, all relevant attachments are included, and the application is signed and submitted. All narrative questions, including any sub-questions, must be answered.

What communication will I receive to find out if I've been awarded?

The legal entity contact listed on the application will receive an email on February 9th, 2024 indicating if the agency has been awarded.

What do I do if I need assistance completing the application?

If you need assistance with completing the application, please sign up for virtual technical assistance by clicking [here.]()

We don't currently have a curriculum or formal lessons plans, what should we submit instead?

You can submit any type of documentation used for planning classroom activities. It does not have to be a formal lesson plan. We will be reviewing the lesson plan to gain an understanding of your current curriculum and classroom activities.

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How are priority areas determined?

Priority areas are determined using data from the [Childcare Map](). The Childcare Map is an interactive tool that allows users to view childcare supply and demand data for the City of Philadelphia. The Curriculum Fund defines a priority area as having a limited availability of high-quality centers and high levels of poverty. To determine if your center is in a priority area, click on the link above to navigate to the Childcare Map.

Can I use the funds for non-OCDEL approved curriculum?

If your site is currently using an OCDEL approved curriculum, you may be able to purchase non approved supplemental materials or a social-emotional curriculum. However, justification will need to be made in the narrative as to how it aligns with program vision/mission and identify whether the curriculum/supplemental materials are research-based. Funding for supplemental materials may be limited.

What does "research-based" mean for an early childhood curriculum?

Defined by the National Center on Early Childhood Development, Teaching, and Learning

A research-based early childhood curriculum is consistent with research on how children develop and learn. It provides rich content and teaching practices that are shown to support children's learning and development. A research-based curriculum focuses on domain-specific, developmentally appropriate content and skills that contribute to children's later development in that domain. A research-based curriculum is also content-rich, meaning that it provides broad and varied experiences and activities that promote children's learning and development. A rich curriculum invites children to think deeply about content that interests them and builds on their prior knowledge and experiences. Finally, a research-based curriculum offers a sequence of learning experiences based on children's developmental progressions.

It is important to note that certain contracted PreK slots (i.e. PHLpreK, Head Start, Pre-K Counts) may require that programs use research-based curriculum in order for the program to be eligible for funding. If you are currently participating in these specific funding streams, or plan on applying for any of these specific funding streams, be sure to consult the program contract and curriculum requirements prior to purchasing curriculum for your program.

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I am a family childcare provider, am I eligible for this grant opportunity?

Yes, all provider types (center, family childcare, and group childcare home) are eligible.

I am a STAR 2 program that is receiving technical assistance. What do I need to submit to provide evidence of this?

Please provide a welcome letter from the initiative that you are working with. If you are receiving technical assistance through the ELRC, please provide a letter from your Quality Coach with documented goals to move to a STAR 3 in 12 months or less.

What is Announcement ELRC 22-07: OCDEL-Approved Curricula and Developmental Assessment Tools in Keystone STARS?

Effective December 1, 2022, **only** current OCDEL-approved curricula and developmental assessment tools will be accepted in meeting EC 3.4.1 and EC 3.4.2 for STAR 3 and 4 designations as outlined in the policy announcement. The optional requirements for STAR 3 and 4 providers to use OCDEL-approved curricula and development assessments in order to earn points in EC 3.4.1 and EC 3.4.2 has **not** changed in recent years. However, OCDEL recognizes these requirements may not have been communicated effectively or implemented consistently across the commonwealth.

Keystone STAR 3 and STAR 4 providers who wish to continue to meet EC 3.4.1 and EC 3.4.2 will need to confirm that the curriculum and developmental assessment tool they are using are OCDEL-approved. Such providers will also need to ensure that the curricula and/or developmental assessments tool they are using will **not** be sunset at the beginning of the following fiscal year. Providers should make this review a regular part of their annual Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) activities and CQI plan update.

Please click here for the full announcement.

Please click here for the OCDEL-approved Curriculum and Developmental Assessment Listing. Please note that updates will be made on an annual basis.

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Program Supports

What are Community of Practice Meetings and how often will they occur?

Community of Practice meetings will provide a shared learning environment where practitioners can connect with one another to share knowledge, discuss challenges, and build a sense of community. COP meetings for directors/administrators will focus on the programmatic supports needed for successful curriculum implementation, while COP's for teacher will focus on pedagogical learning. Teachers identified to participate in technical assistance activities are required to participate in the bi-monthly COP meetings. Directors are also required to participate in quarterly COP meetings.

What role will the Curriculum Fund Project Manager have in providing support to my program?

The Curriculum Fund Project Manager works with providers to determine the overall curricular needs, provide guidance on the different curricula and supplemental materials, and provide individualized technical assistance (TA) to classroom teachers around curriculum implementation. Each provider will receive up to 20 hours of TA for the lead teacher and up to 10 hours of TA for the director/administrative lead. The Curriculum Fund Project Manager will also coordinate and help lead the Community of Practice meetings.

How will award amounts determined?

Award amounts will depend upon program size and demonstrated need. Award amounts will be based on the agency; up to $30,000 is available per agency, not per site in an agency. The Curriculum Fund Project Manager will work with each program to determine the total grant amount and submit the program budget. If awarded, grant funds may only be used for purchases at **qualified STAR 2** and STAR 3 and 4 locations within an agency. Sites at a STAR 1 or yet to be licensed are not eligible.

Are there any supports for applicants that are not selected?

Yes, if your program is not selected to participate in this cohort, you will be invited to attend a Community of Practice meeting or informational sessions to further your exploration of curriculum implementation. These meetings will offer participants insights to the programmatic supports needed to select and implement curriculum. Additional support will be offered to providers that need assistance with the grant writing process through virtual office hours.

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Grants Funds

What are the OCDEL approved curriculum that I may purchase?

A complete list of OCDEL approved curriculum is available here.

What are the OCDEL approved assessment tools that I may purchase?

A complete list of OCDEL approved assessment tools are available here.

Can we purchase computers/iPads/tablets with the funds?

Requests for technology will be considered if there is a demonstrated need for equipment to implement curriculum.

We currently use Creative Curriculum but use Work Sampling for our assessments. Do I have to use the Creative Curriculum (GOLD) assessment?

No, you do not have to switch assessments, but we do encourage applicants to use the assessment designed for the curriculum. Be sure to justify in the narrative question your decision to use a different assessment tool.

What age groups/care levels can be purchased with the funds?

Grant funds may be used to purchase curriculum for infants, toddlers, and pre-K students. The funding does not cover school-age curriculum.

My agency has 4 locations. Three are STAR 4 and one is a STAR 1. Can the funds be used to fund materials at my STAR 1 location as they prepare to move to STAR 2?

If awarded, grant funds may only be used for purchases at qualified STAR 2 and STAR 3 and 4 locations within an agency. Sites at a STAR 1 or yet to be licensed are not eligible.