

Title 28

EDUCATION

Part CLXVII. Bulletin 140—Louisiana Early Childhood Care and Education Network

Chapter 9. Louisiana Early Childhood Education Fund

§901. Purpose, Scope, and Effect

A. The purpose of this Chapter is to set forth the rules and regulations necessary to implement the provisions of R.S. 17:407.30, which creates the Louisiana Early Childhood Education Fund (the “fund”) for the purpose of funding certain early childhood education programs.

AUTHORITY NOTE: Promulgated in accordance with R.S. 17:6 and 17:407.30 et seq.

HISTORICAL NOTE: Promulgated by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, LR 46:

§903. Eligibility Requirements

A. Subject to legislative appropriation, monies in the fund will be awarded annually to local entities approved by the board.

B. Fund awards are reserved for projects that expand the number of early childhood care and education quality seats for families eligible for the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) in type III early learning centers with a performance rating of “proficient” or above and at least one classroom with children age 15 months or younger.

C. Entities eligible to receive fund awards include, but are not limited to, BESE-approved local community networks and early learning centers.

D. Each applicant seeking an award must establish eligibility criteria for the early childhood care and education quality seats financed by local funds that serve as the match for the award. At a minimum, eligibility criteria established by each applicant must contain the following assurances:

1. that only those children whose family income makes them *economically disadvantaged*, as defined in Title 28, Part I, Chapter 11 of the *Louisiana Administrative Code*, shall be eligible for the early childhood care and education quality seats outlined in the applicant’s proposal; and

2. that at least 70 percent of any funding awarded to the applicant will be used to directly fund additional early childhood care and education seats in type III early learning centers with a performance rating of “proficient” or above and at least 1 classroom with children age 15 months or younger;

3. remaining awarded funding will be used to:

a. expand seats through improved quality; and

b. pay for audit costs required per §909 of this Chapter.

E. Funding is intended to supplement existing funding sources and not to be used to supplant existing state or federal funds.

F. Prior to the start of the 2022-2023 school year, the Early Childhood Care and Education Advisory Council shall review this Chapter and, as necessary, recommend revisions to BESE based on learnings from the first two years of the fund.

AUTHORITY NOTE: Promulgated in accordance with R.S. 17:6 and 17:407.30 et seq.

HISTORICAL NOTE: Promulgated by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, LR 46:

§905. Application Process

A. Local entities must submit an application to be considered for the allocation of these funds.

1. The application must define local needs using current data and define objective criteria through which the seats will be awarded.

B. Local entities seeking funding for qualifying projects must secure non-state and non-federal matching funds at a rate of at least one-to-one prior to the awarding of monies from the fund.

1. Eligible sources of a match for funds include locally-generated funds, including donations from private entities and allocations from local governmental entities.

2. School readiness tax credits will not be considered an eligible source of match for purposes of receiving funding pursuant to this Chapter.

C. The application submitted by the local entity must be accompanied by appropriate documentation as identified by the department to substantiate the existence of the match funding. Supporting documentation may include but is not limited to, letter(s) of donation from the donor to the local entity demonstrating the intent to donate a specified amount of funding.

AUTHORITY NOTE: Promulgated in accordance with R.S. 17:6 and 17:407.30 et seq.
HISTORICAL NOTE: Promulgated by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, LR 46:

§907. Award Process

A. A rubric will be used to identify award recipients, and the following criteria will be considered when recommending award recipients for approval to BESE:

1. Ready Start network status;
2. child care assistance program waitlist for the local entity's community network;
3. child poverty rates in the local entity's community network;
4. child care needs in terms of the economic development needs of the parish where the center is located; and
5. the extent to which the proposal increases the availability of high quality learning center seats statewide.

B. All applicants whose submission are selected to receive a funding award must submit documentation to the department to substantiate the existence and possession of the match funds including, but not limited to:

1. copy of check(s) received totaling the required match plus receipt for bank deposit into local entity's bank account;
2. copy of bank statement which lists the deposit for the required match; or
3. copy of bank statement with balance totaling greater than the required match.

C. The total of all awards in any given year may not exceed the amount legislatively appropriated to the fund.

D. If a balance remains in the fund after every qualifying project under §903.B of this Chapter has been funded, then the board may consider awarding funds for the exclusive use of type III early learning centers to provide quality care for children who are ages birth through two and whose parents are eligible for the Child Care Assistance Program.

AUTHORITY NOTE: Promulgated in accordance with R.S. 17:6 and 17:407.30 et seq.
HISTORICAL NOTE: Promulgated by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, LR 46:

§909. Audit of Awards

A. A participating local entity must submit to the department an independent limited scope audit conducted by a certified public accountant who has been approved by the legislative auditor. Audit procedures will be developed by the department and will be limited in scope to those records necessary to substantiate that the funding received was utilized in accordance with program requirements and the approved application.

AUTHORITY NOTE: Promulgated in accordance with R.S. 17:6 and 17:407.30 et seq.
HISTORICAL NOTE: Promulgated by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, LR 46: