

**Questions and Answers
for the**



**FY20 Letter of Interest
(Quality Pre-Kindergarten Services)**

Issued by:



Public Health Management Corporation (PHMC)
on behalf of the
City of Philadelphia Mayor's Office of Education



**MAYOR'S OFFICE
OF EDUCATION**

PHMC received many similar and duplicate questions.
The questions have been consolidated below.

Questions are organized into the following topics:

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Eligibility

Q. If a site was conditionally approved in FY18, do they need to re-apply for PHLpreK for FY20?

- A. Yes, a site that was Pre-Qualified (conditionally approved) in FY18 will need to re-apply for FY20. The Pre-Qualified status is good for one program year. All interested provider locations that are not currently contracted with PHLpreK will need to complete the Letter of Interest to be eligible to participate in the full application process in February.

Q. Do STAR 3 and 4 providers have to submit a Letter of Interest?

- A. Yes. All providers, regardless of STAR level, that are not currently contracted with PHLpreK and wish to participate in the full application process in February must submit a Letter of Interest.

B. If a site has an existing space where children are being served, are they able to expand to include PHLpreK slots, or do PHLpreK slots need to be housed in a different property?

- A. Providers may either expand to include PHLpreK slots in an existing facility or may expand to a new location.

Q. If a new facility just received certification do they need to have children ready to be enrolled in order to apply?

- A. New site locations with a provisional DHS license due to being a newly licensed facility, may respond to the LOI if they have additional site locations that are already at STAR 3 or STAR 4. These sites do not have to have children ready to be enrolled in the program to apply.

Q. Would a new site run by a current PHLpreK provider with a provisional license (with a different name and EIN number) eligible to apply? The owner is the same, but there is a new DHS license with new name, and new location. What if we are still in the process of getting all required documentation together.

- A. New site locations with a provisional DHS license due to being a newly licensed facility, may respond to the LOI if they have additional site locations that are already at STAR 3 or STAR 4. The operator must submit a Letter of Interest for the new location to be eligible to participate in the full application process in February. Those sites with new provisional licenses will be expected to reach full licensure and STAR 3 within a timeframe recommended by PHMC and approved by MOE. The provider will need a DHS certificate to submit the LOI.

Q. How would a site who secured family childcare licensing in August become a PHLpreK provider?

- A. A new family child care provider interested in becoming a part of PHLpreK will need to complete a Letter of Interest. They may complete the LOI individually on their own behalf or may partner with 1199c Training and Upgrading Fund who will submit the LOI on their behalf. The LOI must be completed to be eligible to participate in the full application process in February.

Q. If a brand new facility has not been inspected by DHS as of yet, how can they participate in the Letter of Interest process?

A. Submission of a copy of the DHS license of compliance is a requirement for participation in the LOI and full application process. The facility will need to be inspected and be issued a license prior to the LOI due date of December 14, 2018 to participate.

Q. Is a new facility eligible for funding if programming begins mid-year?

A. To be eligible, the program will need to meet all PHLpreK deliverables including providing 180 days of PHLpreK service commencing on or after the School District of Philadelphia first day of class and prior to June 30, 2020.

Q. If a provider has a center that is just opening up and waiting for the Regional Key to come out to evaluate for STARS, how do they start the process of applying for PHLpreK if they do not have a STARS status yet?

A. The provider must have at least a STAR 1 designation by December 14, 2018 to submit an LOI. Only new site locations, of Legal Entities that have additional STAR 3 and STAR 4 locations, may respond to the LOI with a provisional DHS license due to being a newly licensed facility. All other providers must have a STAR 1 designation and full DHS license to respond.

Q. Would a Catholic Independent school be considered a private partner?

A. As long as the school has a [Pennsylvania Department of Education license](#) and is pursuing a STARS Designation through the [Alternative Pathways to STARS Designation](#) they may respond to the LOI but must have a Keystone STARS designation at the point of application. If the school is not PDE licensed or pursuing STARS designation, they would not be eligible this year.

Q. Does the applicant have to have or obtain a PA Department of Education license to be eligible?

A. No, an applicant does not have to have a PA Department of Education license. This is one option for eligibility. Providers must be licensed by and in full compliance with the Department of Human Services or the PA Department of Education. Providers not licensed through PDE or DHS, but licensed through accrediting bodies outlined in the [Alternative Pathways to STARS Designation](#) of the Keystone STARS Program Standards, may respond to the LOI but must have a Keystone STARS designation at the point of full application.

Q. If a site has children who are 5 yrs.-old and miss the kindergarten cut-off date are those children eligible for PHLpreK?

A. To be eligible for PHLpreK, a child must be three or four years old on or before September 1 of the enrollment year and younger than the entry age for kindergarten in the school district; and reside in the City of Philadelphia. Families who wish for their children to remain in preschool, though they are kindergarten age by September 1st may identify alternate funding; PHLpreK funds may not be used for this purpose.

Q. What is the policy related to conversions?

A. PHLpreK funding is intended to create new seats for 3 and 4 year olds across the city, not to move children that are currently being served under another funding stream. The funding may

not be used to convert or replace seats currently funded through Early Head Start, Head Start, Pre-K Counts, Child Care Works (a.k.a. Child Care Subsidy) or private pay.

- Q. Is a STAR 3 location that is a school-age only facility that is interested in expanding to include pre-k slots eligible to apply as a STAR 3 provider? How will the ECERS/SACERS assessment be viewed?**
- A. During the full application process, you will be asked to submit a copy of the site's most recent PA Keys ERS or CLASS assessment completed for Keystone STARS. If it is noted that the assessment is for an age group other than pre-k PHLpreK will coordinate a quality assessment that reflects the preschool space for programs that received a notice of award.

Letter of Interest Process

- Q. What is the deadline for on November 16, 2018?**
- A. The November 16, 2018 deadline is the deadline to submit questions about the Letter of Interest.
- Q. After December 14, 2018, when the Letter of Interest is due, what are the next steps?**
- A. Letter of Interest responses will be analyzed by the Public Health Management Corporation and the Mayor's Office of Education to understand the level of interest and capacity of respondents to realize the goal of expanding the number of high quality PHLpreK seats by 1,050 seats in FY20. A full application must be completed by all LOI respondents in February 2019 for new providers through the Request for Qualifications (RFQ) process and for current providers through the Continuing Application Process (CAP). Only after both the LOI and Full Application are reviewed for each respondent will an award determination be made and a notification issued to providers in May of 2019.
- Q. Is the amount of slots a provider designates on their Letter of Interest considered their permanent allocation if they apply?**
- A. No, the number of slots a program designated in the Letter of Interest is only to get a general idea of what capacity may be available when the PHLpreK application process opens up. During the full application process the provider may change this number.
- Q. Does the site have to fully fill the slots they designate on the Letter of Interest?**
- A. No, the Letter of Interest process is only to get a general idea of what capacity may be available when the PHLpreK full application process opens. This information will be used to determine the interest and potential availability of slots beyond the existing network of providers. Providers that receive a PHLpreK contract will be responsible for fully filling the PHLpreK slots awarded in the PHLpreK contract.
- Q. Please clarify the following question in Reviewer: "Current/Intended Revenue Sources Head Start %, PreK Counts %, Private Pay %, and Child Care Works %), is this question asking for estimated future numbers or current amounts? Also, is Child Care Works CCIS? And if our**

center isn't yet participating in Head Start, PreK Counts, and Child Care Works, is it ok to enter 0?

A. This question should be answered using the current amounts for each funding source. Child Care Works Subsidy is the funding source that the CCIS office distributes. If the Center is not yet participating in Head Start, PreK Counts or Child Care Works, it is fine to enter "0."

Q. Should we use the maximum capacity indicated on the DHS Certificate of Compliance to calculate the "Current/Intended Revenue Sources (indicate percentage of total slot funding)"?

A. You should respond to this question based on your current enrollment and sources of funding.

Q. Does the following question refer to having noncompliance issues with the Department of Human Services as a result of an annual, unannounced and or complaint inspection?

"Provide a description, in detail, of any situation occurring within the past five (5) years in which the applicant, or joint venture or partnership of which applicant was a part, defaulted or was deemed to be in noncompliance of any contractual obligations."

A. No, issues of DHS noncompliance do not need to be described in the response to this question. However, if the provider is involved in or anticipates being involved in legal proceedings as a result of a DHS noncompliance issue, then this does need to be disclosed in Question #1 in the Narrative section of the LOI.

Q. How many slots can a provider receive for each center. Is there a minimum amount of slots that are awarded?

A. When considering the number of slots to request, the provider should think about what is a good fit for the program. At the time of full application you will be asked to submit a line item budget and will need to consider what is financially feasible based on the related staff, materials and program costs associated with the addition of PHLpreK slots.

Review

Q. Do current providers need to re-register on Reviewr?

A. No, if you already have a Reviewr account you can log in with your Username and Password to complete the Letter of Interest application.

Q. If we submit the Letter of Interest, will Reviewr Save it?

A. Yes, your Letter of Interest will be saved provided you click SAVE. Once you have completed all information you will need to click SUBMIT, to indicate that the application is complete and ready for review. You will be able to save a partially completed LOI and come back to it at a later date. You will be able to edit any completed submissions until the LOI deadline.

Q. I have multiple sites that I'd like to apply for. After submitting the LOI for the first locations, will the system allow me to enter additional LOIs for additional locations.

A. Yes, if you want to submit a Letter of Interest for more than one location you will have to enter each one individually. After submitting the first LOI you will select “Add Another Submission” from the left column.

Q. Are the applications from the previous fiscal years still on the Reviewr site?

A. Yes, applications from the previous procurement process are still in Reviewr but are not able to be edited.

Services and Performance Expectations

Q. Can the PHLpreK students be in blended classrooms with students from other funding sources? Can they be in multiple blended classrooms or do they have to be in one classroom?

A. PHLpreK children may all be in one classroom or in blended classrooms. In both instances, the program must ensure that the classroom(s) serving children funded through PHLpreK is meeting all of the requirements of PHLpreK (e.g. 5.5 hours of instructional time, OCDEL approved curriculum, staff qualifications, etc.)

Q. If a site has their own curriculum, would they have to change it to participate in PHLpreK?

A. The curriculum used in any classroom that includes a child who is enrolled in the PHLpreK program must be approved by the Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) and aligned with the Early Learning Standards established by the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

Q. Does PHLpreK require programs to provide health benefits for their staff?

A. PHLpreK does not require programs to provide benefits for staff, but does require them to meet the city living wage requirements, which is \$12.10/hour.

Budget

Q. Does the \$850 per child/month have to be spent in a certain way per the contract?

A. The funding amount per child is meant to support the implementation of the program. Funds may be used *only* for child care related expenditures, which includes expenses that support blended classrooms. This can be used to support staffing or the purchase of developmentally appropriate items for example. At the time of the full application and contracting, it is required that providers submit a budget detailing how they intend to use the PHLpreK funds.

Q. Are there attendance stipulations for reimbursement?

A. Approved PHLpreK enrollments, must also demonstrate at least one day in the month for the site to be able to invoice for the child. PHLpreK Providers must monitor attendance and enter this data weekly into the ChildWare reporting system. Each Provider is expected to maintain a minimum of 85% average daily attendance for each month at each facility throughout the school

year. Attendance rates are calculated using the number of approved enrolled children rather than the number of allocated slots.

Priority Areas

Q. The Priority Areas on the list are those that have been revitalized. How were the Priority Areas determined? Children in other areas also need access to quality pre-k programming.

A. The FY 20 solicitation is citywide. Providers that are not in one of the pre-determined Priority Areas are strongly encouraged to submit a Letter of Interest. The Priority Areas are determined by the following criteria: fewer than 40% of the children have access to high quality pre-k, at least 12% of the area lives in poverty, a high number of children are exposed to two or more early childhood risk factors, and no PHLpreK investment to date.

Q. If your center is not located in one of the Priority Areas, do you still have a chance of being considered for a PHLpreK contract?

A. The FY20 solicitation is city wide, so everyone should apply regardless of the location of the facility. Priority areas are specific to the eligibility of STAR 1 and STAR 2 providers.

STAR Level

Q. Why are STAR 1 and 2 providers being encouraged to submit a Letter of Interest when there are STAR 3 and 4 providers who were not contracted with PHLpreK in previous years?

A. STAR 3 and 4 providers will be prioritized for funding in FY20, however, for PHLpreK to reach its capacity goal, STAR 1 and 2 providers need to be included specifically in the Priority Areas. These “growth providers” must demonstrate a commitment to moving to a higher level of quality. STAR 1 and 2 providers that submit an LOI will be required to participate in a cohort for move-up supports with a goal of getting to STAR 3 by June 30, 2019.

Q. How realistic is it for a STAR 1 provider to get to a STAR 3 within the next 5 or 6 months?

A. The ability for a provider to move to a STAR 3 within 5 or 6 months will depend partly on the provider’s effort so far and efforts going forward to meet requirements to move-up.

Q. If a provider is at a STAR 1, is the expectation that they will move to STAR 2 in February and STAR 3 in June?

A. For STAR 1 providers outside of the priority areas, the site location must be at a STAR 2 by time of full application due in April, in order to be eligible to apply. Current STAR 1 locations, outside of the priority areas may respond to the LOI , but must have a plan for achieving STAR 2 by full application submission in the spring and at a STAR 3 by June, the time of contracting.

STAR 1 Providers in the priority areas, may still respond to the LOI and full application in April, however they will be required to complete a waiver outlining how they will achieve STAR 3 and STAR 4 within the timeframe recommended by PHMC and approved by MOE.

All STAR 1 and STAR 2 respondents to the LOI will be required to participate in a move up cohort to achieve STAR 3 beginning in January 2019 facilitated by PHMC.

Funding decisions announced in May 2019 will give priority to STAR 3 and STAR 4 providers.

Staff Qualifications

Q. What are the Staff Qualification requirements for teachers? I'm not sure if my staff meets the PHLpreK staff qualifications requirements, what do I do?

- A. At this time, each classroom must have a Lead Teacher with a minimum of an Associate's Degree in ECE or related field as defined by the 2014 PA Career Pathway. Each classroom with more than 10 children must also have an Assistant Teacher with a minimum qualification of (1) a CDA credential or (2) 6 credits in Early Childhood Education coursework from an accredited institution of higher learning, as defined by the 2014 PA Career Pathway. Every Family Child Care Owner/Operator must have a minimum of an Associate's degree in ECE or related field as defined by the 2014 PA Career Pathway.

The PHLpreK team understands that every path is different, because of this, staff qualifications are reviewed at the time of contracting. Any specific questions about staff qualifications can be directed to PHLpreK@phmc.org.

Q. If a staff person qualifies as Level 5 for STARS on the PA Career Lattice, how are they recognized in PHLpreK?

- A. Staff qualifications are highly individualized and are reviewed at the time of contracting to determine if staff meet the PHLpreK staff qualification requirements.

Q. Is a Master's degree in art education considered an ECE related field?

- A. No, Art Education is not considered a related field as defined by the 2014 PA Career Pathway. Staff qualifications are highly individualized and are reviewed at the time of contracting to determine if staff meet the PHLpreK staff qualification requirements.

Q. If a director is currently working toward obtaining their director's credential, does it need to be completed by the time of the full PHLpreK application?

- A. No, the director does not have to have to complete the director's credential at the time of full application.