



STATE OF NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

A Memo from the New Jersey Department of Education

Date: September 30, 2026

To: Local Educational Agency Leads

Route To: Directors of Curriculum and Instruction, Supervisors of Curriculum and Instruction, Early Childhood Supervisors, School Business Administrators

From: Katrina T. McCombs
Chief Early Childhood Education Officer/Assistant Commissioner
Division of Early Childhood Services

Deadline: October 7, 2026, 12 p.m. – register for mandatory technical assistance
November 24, 2026, 12 p.m. – application deadline

Release of 2027-2028 Preschool Expansion Notice of Funding Opportunity

The New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) is pleased to release the Preschool Education Aid (PEA) Notice of Funding Opportunity (NFO) on the [preschool website](#) to local educational agencies (LEAs) for the 2027-2028 school year. **This opportunity is open to any LEA in New Jersey that is not currently receiving preschool education aid and offers full-day kindergarten.** Non-operating LEAs are eligible to apply in collaboration with an LEA that provides an educational program to their kindergarten students.

Please note that award terms and amounts are subject to change pending enactment of the Fiscal Year 2028 Appropriations Act. This NFO is being released in advance of that Act as an anticipatory step necessary to align the timing of these expansion grant awards with the timing of K-12 state aid notices, allowing awardees to incorporate funded preschool programs into their initial school year 2027-2028 budget development procedures.

Note: Applicants must demonstrate due diligence in establishing partnerships to provide their preschool program via a mixed-delivery system with licensed childcare providers and Head Start programs in their community or neighboring communities that are ready, willing, and able to meet all preschool program requirements.

Mandatory Technical Assistance Workshop

To apply, LEAs must attend a mandatory technical assistance session. Two in-person sessions will be offered on **Tuesday, October 13**, from 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. OR from 1:00 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. at 100 Riverview Plaza, Conference Room 1 (CR1), in Trenton, NJ 08360. It is recommended that LEAs identify a team of administrators to participate in the technical assistance workshop. LEAs must send a minimum of one staff member or consultant to be eligible to apply. If LEAs plan to apply collaboratively, a staff member or consultant from each LEA in the collaboration must attend.

Please [register here](#) to attend the **10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.** session, or [register here](#) to attend the **1:00 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.** session. LEAs are only required to attend one of the two sessions and must

stay for the duration of the presentation. The sessions are identical, so there is no need to attend both. **The registration deadline is 12:00 p.m. on Wednesday, October 7, 2026.**

Application Submission

Completed applications are **due by 12 p.m. on Tuesday, November 24, 2026**, via [Homeroom](#) (NOT PBOP). NJDOE **will not accept a late proposal**. The responsibility for a timely submission resides with the applicant. The applicant LEA will not be eligible for an award if the proposal is incomplete or received after the due date.

Fiscal Year 2028 Awards

LEAs that have higher free and reduced-price lunch (FRPL) percentages will be prioritized for consideration. Priority consideration will be based on:

- Districts at 20 percent FRPL or above, with successful applications, will receive priority funding.
- Districts at 15-19 percent FRPL, with successful applications, will be eligible to receive funding in the second round of consideration.
- Districts at 10-14 percent FRPL, with successful applications, will be eligible to receive funding in the third round of consideration.
- Districts with less than ten percent FRPL, with successful applications, will be eligible to receive funding in the final round of consideration.

Eligible applications that meet the minimum score of 70 points (prior to the application of priority points) and submit a budget that supports implementation of all elements of a high-quality preschool program will be ranked and funded in descending order, from highest to lowest score, utilizing the priority rankings identified above, until available funds have been used. Reviewers will use the points indicated in each section to score the application's content. Priority points will be awarded for applications that include the mixed delivery model and applications to serve a consortium of districts.

Additionally, please note that pursuant to P.L.2025, c.100, FY26, FY27, and FY28 expansion awards (i.e., awards for school districts receiving PEA for the first time in FY26, FY27, and FY28) will be made pursuant to a cost-sharing methodology pilot program. Under the program, the NJDOE's PEA award will be based on an awardee school district's District Aid Percentage (the greater of 40% or the percentage derived by dividing the district's equalization aid, as calculated pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:7F-53 by the district's adequacy budget, as calculated pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:7F-51). For additional information, please see the full NFO.

Contact Information

Questions may be directed to the Office of Preschool Expansion at doepreschoolexpansion@doe.nj.gov.