



On My Way Pre-K Pilot Program

2015 Annual Report



Introduction

Why is high quality Pre-K important for disadvantaged children?

Research clearly indicates that high quality early educational experiences are important to the future success of children- in particular children who are growing up in poverty.

- 90% of a child's brain development occurs before the age of 5.
- This brain development is not genetically hardwired, but is dependent on the child's environment and the responsiveness of the child's parents, caregivers and early education teachers.
- Children in poverty face academic and social opportunity gaps including a lack of early exposure to language, reading and math.
- Gaps are observed as early as 18 months of age and most often widen over time. Children from low income families typically start school a year to a year and a half behind their peers. The average fourth grader growing up in poverty is already three grade levels behind and only half will graduate from high school. For those that do graduate high school, they are eight times less likely to graduate from college.
- This cycle of poverty not only impacts the individual child but also negatively impacts society through increased costs for healthcare and other social services and a decrease in tax revenues.
- This achievement gap also negatively impacts the local workforce and economic development.
- Numerous research studies have demonstrated that that this opportunity gap is lessened by providing high quality early learning environments for children who live in disadvantaged environments. Children who start school well prepared are much more likely to experience academic success.
- Research has shown that high quality affordable pre-K, such as Indiana's On My Way Pre-K Pilot, is a good investment with returns on investment ranging from \$1.80 to \$17 for every dollar spent due to the reduction of academic remediation needs, retention rates and special education placements, as well as fewer behavior problems in the early grades and reduced rates of involvement in the juvenile justice system and arrests as adults.

Annual Reporting Requirements

Under IC12-17.7.2-13 the office shall report to the governor, the budget committee, the state board of education, the department of education, and, in an electronic format under IC5-14-6, the legislative council regarding the pilot program.

Program Overview

Indiana's pre-K pilot, On My Way Pre-K, was created under IC12-17.2-7.2. On My Way Pre-K provides low income 4-year olds with access to free, high quality pre-K during the year before they start Kindergarten. The program is available in five pilot counties: Allen, Jackson, Lake, Marion and Vanderburgh. These counties were selected based on numerous demographic factors including the number of young children living in poverty and the county's readiness to implement the program. These five counties are geographically diverse and represent both urban and rural areas. The pilot is administered by the FSSA, Office of Early Childhood and Out-of-School Learning.

Child Eligibility

Applications are accepted from families who are seeking affordable pre-K education for their child and meet the eligibility requirements. Families must :

- Earn less than 127% of the Federal Poverty level (for a family of four, this is approximately \$31,000/yr gross),
- Reside within one of the pilot counties, and
- Agree to participate in family engagement activities, ensure their children attend at least 85% of the program days, and send their child to Kindergarten the following school year.
- Children must be 4- but not yet 5-years old by August 1 of the pre-K program year.

As the number of applications received exceeds the number of grants available, grants are awarded to families using an automated, randomized lottery process. Families that receive grants may choose from any eligible On My Way Pre-K provider and may choose from full or part time programs that operate for either the school year or the full calendar year.

On My Way Pre-K was originally set to begin August, 2015; however, in order to serve children as quickly as possible, Allen, Lake, Marion and Vanderburgh started early in January, 2015. The children enrolled at this time are considered cohort 1 of the Pilot. As this cohort began in the middle of a school year, children in this cohort received 3-6 months of pre-K.

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The second cohort began August, 2015 in all five of the pilot counties. Children in the second cohort will receive services throughout the 2015-16 school year.

Within six (6) weeks FSSA received 1,800 applications for the first cohort. Over 6,000 applications were received for the second cohort in just nine (9) weeks.

Provider Eligibility

The My Way Pre-K Pilot program is a mixed delivery model- meaning many different types of high quality early education providers can participate including public and non-public schools, and community based programs such as Head Start, faith based programs, licensed centers and licensed homes. All On My Way Pre-K programs must demonstrate that they offer a high quality pre-k program. Public schools and community based program must obtain a Level 3 or Level 4 Paths to QUALITY™ rating. Non-public schools and stand-alone preschools must be accredited for pre-K by a recognized national or regional accrediting body. A list of eligible pre-K programs can be found at www.onmywayprek.org.

There are currently 219 eligible providers across the five pilot counties.

Provider Reimbursement Rates

Providers receive reimbursement for pre-K services directly from the State. Reimbursement rates depend on the number of total hours offered by the program and range between the statutorily required range of \$2,500-6,800 per child. Reimbursements are capped at the cost to provide services.

The average grant reimbursement amount for Cohort 1 was \$3,226.57. This is significantly lower than the average grant cost for cohort 2 due to the fact that Cohort 1 began mid-year. The average grant amount for pre-K year 2015-2016 (Cohort 2) is \$6,133.

Funding for On My Way Pre-K

SBA set aside \$10M from FY14 from planned FSSA reversions to fund the first year of On My Way Pre-K. The following year \$10M/year was appropriated from the General Fund. 10-50% of the cost of each grant must be supported by matching funds. For each of the first two cohorts,

each pilot county provided a 10% match. Any matching funds not expended will carry forward to the next school year.

FSSA has developed effective coordination between Head Start, CCDF and the Early Education Matching Grants to ensure the most effective, efficient use of public funds.

As of November, 2015 the total matching funds received is over \$939,000.

2015 Annual Accomplishments

Throughout the year, many significant milestones were met including the completion of infrastructure design and implementation, successful family and community outreach efforts and eligible pre-K provider capacity building. Efforts have been highly collaborative between state agencies, local leadership teams, pre-k programs and families. Highlights include the following:

Infrastructure design and Implementation:

- Family Eligibility Intake Agents identified and contracts were executed. Intake Agents also determine family eligibility for CCDF to promote alignment across public funding streams.
- A software system (the Indiana Pre-K Intake System, IPKIS) was built to support eligibility determination. The system is used by Intake Agents to ensure accuracy and accountability across family and provider eligibility, obligations and expenditures.
- The automated randomized selection (lottery) process was developed.
- Pre-K program managers were hired within each pilot county.
- An on-line family application developed and deployed.
- Provider and Family Agreements were implemented.
- Reimbursement rates were established and the automated payment process was implemented.
- An On My Way Provider Portal was launched and includes attendance tracking and invoice/payment details.
- Purdue University has been selected to evaluate the improvement of school readiness and academic outcomes through 3rd grade of children receiving a grant.

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Family Outreach and Engagement:

- Outreach plans were developed and implemented in order to identify eligible children who were not currently being served.
- FSSA developed On My Way Pre-K outreach materials including signs, flyers, radio ads and other outreach tools.
- The Indiana Early Learning Advisory Committee developed an evidence based Family Engagement Toolkit to assist providers in implementing the required family engagement activities. Training and technical assistance on the tool kit will be offered to providers so that providers help to empower parents to be engaged in their child's learning and future academic success. The Toolkit may be found at http://www.in.gov/fssa/files/FamilyEngagementToolkit_Final.pdf .

Coordination with the Indy Preschool Scholarship Program (Indy PSP):

- Indy PSP was created by an Indianapolis City Council ordinance
- Indy PSP provides funding to serve an 715 additional Marion County children ages 3 and 4 whose families earn less than 127% of the FPL.
- Indy PSP also provides the required matching funds for Marion County.
- FSSA, United Way of Central Indiana and the Indianapolis Mayor's Office worked closely together to streamline services for children, families and providers by creating alignment across the eligibility requirements for providers and families, use of a shared data system, shared Intake Agents, joint family/provider applications and collaborative efforts at family outreach and capacity building.

Provider Capacity Building:

- FSSA developed an accelerated pathway for public schools to qualify under Path to QUALITY (PTQ) and supports for community based programs currently on PTQ to assist them in reaching levels 3 and 4.
- FSSA and local leadership teams have convened numerous provider informational meetings to explain the program and encourage participation.
- There are currently 219 approved On My Way Pre-K eligible providers representing a mixed delivery system of all provider types available.

FSSA, Early Learning Indiana and United Way of Central Indiana partnered to offer almost \$500,000 of capacity building grants that helped to create approximately 1,000 new high quality Pre-K seats across the five pilot counties.

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County	# Total approved providers	Approved public schools	Approved non-public schools	Approved charter schools	Approved licensed centers	Approved licensed homes	Approved registered ministries
Allen	46	0	1	0	18	24	3
Jackson	12	3	1	0	1	5	2
Lake	40	0	0	1	16	22	1
Marion -	94	10	9	2	34	20	19
Vanderburgh	27	6	0	0	11	7	3
Totals	219	19	11	3	80	78	28

Enrollment for Cohort 1 and Cohort 2

Cohort 1:

421 children were enrolled in the four counties that started early in January, 2015. Providers from every category (public, charter and non-public schools, licensed centers and homes and faith-based registered ministries) were selected by families.

County	Number of Children Enrolled
Allen	52
Lake	100
Marion	212
Vanderburgh	57
Total	421

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Pre-K School Year 2015-16 (Cohort 2):

2300 children are currently enrolled for the pre-K school year 2015-16. Providers from every category (public, charter and non-public schools, licensed centers and homes and faith-based registered ministries) were selected by families.

County	Number of Children Enrolled
Allen	217
Jackson	65
Lake	227
Marion- On My Way	880
Marion- Indy PSP	715
Vanderburgh	196
Total	2,300

Program Expenditures and Projections SFY15 and SFY16

SFY15 Expenditures:

SFY15	State Funds	Local Match	Direct Service Payments	Non-Direct Service Costs	Total Expenditures
Allen		\$26,400	\$182,682		
Jackson		\$0	\$0		
Lake		\$40,000	\$251,714		
Marion		\$100,000	\$630,184		
Vanderburgh		\$36,000	\$128,589		
Total	\$10,000,000	\$202,400	\$1,193,169	\$482,682	\$1,675,851

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SYF16- Projections

SFY16	State Funds	Local Match	Direct Service Projections	Non-Direct Service Projections	Total Projections
Allen		\$131,000	\$1,367,475		
Jackson		\$40,000	\$171,511		
Lake		\$115,000	\$1,127,395		
Marion		\$470,000	\$5,476,406		
Vanderburgh		\$89,536	\$1,167,925		
Carry Forward	\$8,526,549	\$93,930			
Appropriation	\$10,000,000				
Total	\$18,526,549.00	\$939,466	\$9,307,713	\$1,411,806	\$10,719,510

Pre-K School Year 2016-17 (Cohort 3) Timeline

The family application period for the 2016-17 school year opens January 13, 2016. Families will be able to apply online, by mail and in person. Family outreach activities including radio spots, written materials and outreach events are planned within each of the five pilot counties to ensure that families are aware that applications are being accepted and to provide assistance with any questions or concerns. Applications will be accepted until March 25, 2016. At this time the automated, randomized lottery will be run and families will be notified if they received a grant during the first week of April. Families who receive a grant will have support in selecting an On My Way Pre-K provider for their child. All enrollments must be completed July 31, 2016. The pre-K school year will begin in August.

Program Contact Information

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