



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Early Educator Wage Sustainability RFP

July 23, 2025

Thank you for joining us at the GOISD Pre-Proposal Webinar held on July 15, 2025 at 9:00am. The webinar provided an overview of the RFP for the Early Educator Wage Sustainability grant. The questions and answers below have been compiled from the webinar as well as those submitted by email to jstenson@goisd.org. Please refer to the GOISD website for more information regarding this RFP: <https://www.goisd.org/about/request-for-proposals.cfm>.

PROJECT ADMINISTRATION

Question: Can a lead/co-lead subcontract with another organization that would have the capacity to administer the grant?

Answer: Yes, if that is determined by the Coalition to be the most efficient way to implement the grant, and the cost does not exceed the 10% administrative cap. Another option to consider is having organizations affiliated with the Coalition partner to implement the work by donating time and resources from their organization, which would qualify as an in-kind match.

Question: If we receive the full amount from the state, our fiduciary is responsible each month for coming up with \$100,000 to pay out each month from somewhere else and then get reimbursed that amount? Is that correct or am I misunderstanding?

Answer: Yes, the Coalition is responsible for obtaining the funding to pay the stipends and other costs to implement the pilot each month and will be reimbursed on a monthly basis.

Question: If we receive start-up funds to cover the initial stipend payments, will that amount reduce our reimbursement for January expenses or will we be able to carry it forward throughout the term of the grant to cover stipend payments each month before we receive reimbursement for the previous month? For example, if we get \$50,000 in start-up funds and invoice GOISD for \$75,000 for January 2026, will our payment for January 2026 be \$25,000 or \$75,000?

Answer: The start-up funds are intended to support the Coalition in paying the first month's stipends, if needed, in January. The start-up funding will not carry forward beyond the first month, and the example above is correct - the start-up funds will be deducted from the amount you are reimbursed in your first invoice.

Question: What is the maximum amount that can be requested in start-up funds to support the distribution of the first month's stipend?

Answer: If a start-up payment is needed to provide the first month of stipend payments, describe the amount needed in your application. Each start-up request will be reviewed individually to determine feasibility.



Question: What will be the typical lag time on payments once we submit an SOE? Are there set timeframes for submitting SOEs?

Answer: Once awarded, each grantee will work with GOISD/MiLEAP to coordinate a schedule that aligns payments to participants with the submission of SOEs to expedite payment processing. GOISD typically has a two-week payment processing timeline, provided all necessary documentation is submitted in a timely fashion and SOEs can be approved as submitted. Please note that holidays and other closures could impact this timeline.

Question: Are we supposed to have all the participants selected prior to January 2026?

Answer: Yes, you should plan for all stipends to begin January 2026 for as many providers as possible. If you apply for and receive additional funding you should identify additional recipients within one month.

Question: What is the recommendation of how to track if someone leaves their employer beyond requiring them to tell us this and asking the program to confirm? If they go to a different child care business during the pilot, does that person remain eligible to receive the stipend?

Answer: As part of the application, the Coalition will provide GOISD/MiLEAP with your planned approach to payments (whether through the early education business or directly to individuals). If you choose to pay early educators directly, you may decide the conditions for continued payment should they change employers. If the payments are sent to the employer to distribute, they would need to attest that stipend recipients are still an employee as part of their monthly reporting. At a minimum, the monthly financial reporting that you will submit to GOISD/MiLEAP, will require you to identify each person receiving a payment, the amount of the payment, and any changes in employment. Employment changes must also be reflected in MiRegistry.

Question: As we don't currently have a tax professional on our coalition, what is the recommended process for handling this? Will GOISD/MiLEAP be providing guidance on what we can/can't say? Will other supports be available to help leads work with ECE programs/educators to understand the benefit/tax implications for accepting funds? Can funds covering administrative support child care providers to get tax consultation or benefits consultation?

Answer: GOISD/MiLEAP are unable to provide tax guidance, however, resources regarding benefit and tax implications will be provided through the TA offered to grantees, which should eliminate the need for individual Coalitions to seek or fund tax or benefit consultation.

Question: Do you have any other examples of models in other locations (other than Iowa) that include specific details on how the program was implemented - selection criteria, etc.?

Answer: The [Early Care and Education Wage Pilot Case Study](#) is a helpful resource.



Question: Given the potential impact of increased income and knowing the pilot's implementation period is longer than 12 months, some participants may realize they need to stop participating in the pilot to avoid loss of benefits. What is the preferred approach of how to handle this during implementation? Considering the benefit cliff, does the State have flexibility (or could ask for a waiver) on what's included in MI, to exclude this income from those who are on State benefit programs?

Answer: Participation is voluntary and depending on how the Coalition decides to pay the stipends there may be different implications. Coalitions should be transparent in their materials that taxes and/or other benefits someone receives can be impacted and determine policies around participants beginning and ending payments. Michigan is exploring options to support Regional Coalitions with this challenge and hopes to share information prior to the first payments to early educators.

Question: Is the grant funding timeline January 1, 2026 - August 15, 2027 or January 1, 2026 - September 30, 2027? I know the final stipends must go out by August 15, 2027, but I'm wondering if we should budget for administrative work in the second half of August 2027 and in September 2027, knowing that there will be reports and other work after the final stipends are paid.

Answer: Grant awards are planned by October 1, 2025 with a start date of November 21, 2025 and will end September 30, 2027. Final stipend payments must be made by August 15, 2027.

Question: What is required of grantees and/or child care programs to "prove" the hours a staff person has worked each week/month and that shows stipends were paid to educators?

Answer: All grantees will be required to submit, at a minimum, the name, position, stipend amount, hours worked, if participants have left their position (and if so why) and confirmation of participation in MiRegistry each month on a template provided by GOISD that you will be required to submit with the monthly SOE.

Question: While there is a lot of up and down in the dollar-flow from the Feds, what is the outlook of sustainability past Aug 2027 and what are the State's intentions on that as this work seems catalytic?

Answer: This pilot intentionally requires grantees to engage businesses and Coalition partners throughout the region in this effort and to create a sustainability plan to continue to provide stipends to the participants and additional early education professionals after the grant period. Data collected throughout the initiative that demonstrates the success and continued public-private partnership will be important in advocating for continued state investments.

Question: Given that the de minimis rate increased to 15% as of 10/1/24 and funding comes from PDG grants, can we factor that federal requirement into our budget instead of the 10% administration rate?

Answer: The funding for this grant is state school aid funding under Section 32v of P.A. 103 of 2023 not federal or PDG funding. The administrative costs are capped at 10%.



MATCHING FUNDS (IN KIND AND CASH DONATIONS)

Question: For the \$50,000 initial amount, how does that impact the overall match amount? The budget worksheet makes it look like the \$50,000 initial contribution is included in the match amount - so if you only had \$50,000 contribution, you would get \$500,000 base amount plus the match amount (either \$50,000 or \$100,000) - is that correct?

Answer: Yes, that is correct. We will start matching funds once you demonstrate a \$50k match either in cash or in-kind (and the initial \$50k will be matched).

Question: Does the match of \$50,000 have to be new funding dedicated to the child care project, or new/existing funding for the organization?

Answer: Cash match funds must be contributions designated as funding for stipends paid to early educators. In-kind donations can be new or existing contributions such as donated time or funding that supports the implementation of the wages pilot or adjacent early educator compensation initiatives.

Question: Could we work with MiLEAP and the MI Tri-Share hub to aggregate the employer cash payments for each region as a cash match for 32v?

Answer: MiLEAP has obtained this data and will provide information directly to the lead/co-lead of each Coalition by July 25th. The initial data reflects business contributions toward MI Tri-Share child care payments made between January 1 and May 31, 2025, and applicants may use this amount toward their in-kind match. Data will be compiled again at the close of December 2025 invoices and provided in late January 2026 for those who would like to submit an additional application for funding reflective of business contributions toward MI Tri-Share child care payments between June and December by the February 2026 deadline. These MI Tri-Share amounts do not currently and will not in the future include child care payments made by child care businesses participating in MI Tri-Share as employers because these child care owners offer a diverse array of child care benefits/supports for their employees, including discounts for using their care, MI Tri-Share, direct care stipends, etc. Providers participating in MI Tri-Share as employers may pay \$0 to themselves for employees using their care and may pay MI Tri-Share employer invoices for employees using care elsewhere. You may reach out to all child care business owners in your region to find out what (if any) discounts/benefits they provide for their employees and the estimated in-kind amounts for those discounts/benefits if you would like to include those amounts as in-kind matches. To help get you started, we will provide a list of child care business owners in your region who are participating in MI Tri-Share as employers should you want to reach out to them (and other providers in your region who are not participating in MI Tri-Share).

Question: What is the timeframe for calculating in-kind and is it the same timeframe that MI Tri-Share matches are being calculated?

Answer: Based on the data that we have that is consistent across MI Tri-Share hubs, the data is from January 1, 2025 - May 31, 2025, and can be used for the application due in August. Other in-kind contributions may be considered for any commitments made on or after October 2024 through September 30, 2027.



Question: Can you specify what kind of employer/business contributions would be allowed other than MI Tri-Share participation? Does this include non-wage compensation amounts that child care businesses are paying their employees? For example, providing on-site child care, child care employee subsidization/employee tuition discounts, contributions to employee's Flexible Spending Accounts, tuition amounts that child care businesses waive for their employees.

Answer: In order for child care business non-wage compensation provided to early educators to count as in-kind, documentation would need to be collected and submitted with the application in a MOU or letter of commitment, specifying the cash value of the benefit.

Question: For the in-kind match, do the funds need to be going toward "wage support" for early educators or can it be more broadly supporting the ECL system? For instance, could we count a grant that one of our region's GSCs has received from a local funder to address enhancing the region's ECL system?

Answer: In kind match funds must support the implementation of the wages pilot or adjacent early educator compensation initiatives. Please remember that federal and state funds (like 32p) cannot be utilized for this purpose. Specific information about the funding source and purpose of this specific grant would need to be submitted to GOISD for a clear determination.

Question: What is considered local scholarship funds? Do the scholarship funds have to be for early educators? Could funds for child care tuition/community scholarship fund for children count? Other types of scholarships?

Answer: Local/community funded child care tuition scholarships may be counted as in kind contributions. If you have an example of another type of scholarship you'd like to discuss please contact GOISD directly.

Question: Will the time ECE programs spend providing required reporting materials for the wage pilot count towards "in-kind administration costs?"

Answer: Yes, that is an acceptable in-kind cost, at a maximum of 5 hours per month for a center and 3 hours per month for a home-based business.

Question: Can grants/donations from our local service clubs (like Kiwanis, Rotary, etc.) or United Ways to our ECE programs be considered as in-kind for matching funds? Some providers utilize their local services clubs and UWs to help offset programmatic costs and/or help provide scholarships to families, support costs of training for staff, etc.

Answer: Grants and donations provided directly to early education businesses only count as in-kind if they are specifically designated for supporting early educator wages. The source and a description of the project/support should be submitted to GOISD to determine whether or not it would meet the in-kind criteria.

Question: Would donated space count as in-kind? For example, many Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP)/Head Start programs are given space to operate in. The value of donated



space from the community and schools to operate Early Childhood programs. Would these count?

Answer: No, the matching funds need to support compensation efforts, not donations that support other aspects of child care businesses.

Question: Are TEACH scholarships in-kind or cash?

Answer: TEACH is funded through federal CCDF funds. It cannot count as match or in-kind.

Question: Is Great Start to Quality (GSQ) Resource Center staff time acceptable for in-kind?

Answer: No. The GSQ Resource Centers are funded through federal CCDF funds.

Question: Does funding that is not state/federal that goes towards supporting registered apprenticeships count as in-kind?

Answer: The funding would have to be dedicated to the wage increases of the apprentices in order to be considered in-kind. Specific details about the source and intent should be submitted to GOISD for review.

Question: What documentation for in-kind or cash match funds, other than Tri-Share, is required?

Answer: Letters of commitment or MOUs that specify what the contribution includes and its cash value, who the donating agency, organization or individual is and that the commitment is specifically intended to support the wages pilot or other specific early educator compensation initiative.

Question: Is a letter of intent an acceptable proof from donors or those contributing to in-kind during the proposal process?

Answer: In order for cash and in-kind donations to be matched, formal commitments must be demonstrated (a MOU or letter of commitment). Grant awards will not be made without formal commitments of at least the \$50k minimum amount.

Question: Are there any limits from GOISD/MiLEAP about the type of condition/assurances a donor can make? For example, can a business require their funds go only to programs serving their employees? Can a business require that a child care business enter into a contract with them to provide care?

Answer: No, GOISD/MiLEAP are not specifying limits regarding assurances to donors, but encourage Coalitions to approach requests for matching support with businesses as an initiative that will support the community as a whole by investing in early educators as a workforce development strategy. We encourage you to work with a knowledgeable entity who can advise on incentives that may be available to businesses who want to support this initiative.

STIPENDS

Question: Are you looking for a certain percentage of the current workforce to receive stipends?



Answer: No.

Question: Is there another vehicle to compensation that we aren't seeing because the funds are defined as 'stipends'?

Answer: This pilot has been designed to provide monthly stipends of \$300 for full-time or \$200 for part-time early educators.

Question: Will ECE programs need to define staff as full or part time for the pilot OR will stipend amounts be based on actual hours each month?

Answer: Stipend recipients will need to be identified as full or part-time in alignment with the MiLEAP Division for Child Development and Care (CDC) definitions of part-time (up to 60 hours biweekly) and full-time (61+ hours biweekly).

EARLY EDUCATOR QUALIFICATIONS/PRIORITIZATION

Question: Any eligibility restrictions on for-profit businesses versus nonprofit child care providers?

Answer: There are no stated restrictions regarding for-profit versus non-profit businesses, however, each Coalition should discuss and collectively determine the types of early educators that you are prioritizing, including explaining your criteria and how it aligns with your regional strategic priorities or areas of focus in Part 2 of the application.

Question: Is it acceptable to prioritize programs that offer full-day, full year care in our rationale for program selection?

Answer: If your Coalition has a good rationale for prioritizing programs that are full-day, full year, yes.

Question: Does this include family and group home based childcare or just centers?

Answer: Yes, any licensed child care program.

Question: Must Head Start and GSRP providers receive stipends or is this note (Part 2 in the RFP) just an example of different provider types? If Head Start and GSRP providers must be included but the criteria our coalition sets excludes most of them (for instance, because infant/toddler educators and educators making the least amount of money are prioritized), is there a certain percentage of each provider type that you are looking for?

Answer: The 32v legislative language specifies that this funding be spent on a variety of early educators in licensed child care settings, Head Start and GSRP programs. Each Coalition may prioritize who they select to include in the pilot in their region and explain the rationale for the prioritized entities in their application. Ultimately, as a collective, this initiative must demonstrate that funding was spent in support of all of these early education settings.

Question: For home-based child care - is it correct that the family and group home owners are also considered teachers/early educators?

Answer: Yes.



Question: When we award programs as participants in the pilot, we are tentatively planning on saying something like, "Program A: based on the employment numbers you will receive X number of stipends for part-time staff and X number for full-time staff." If someone leaves Program A, we would like to be able to recall that stipend and potentially use it to add a new program to the wage pilot *rather* than having Program A use the stipend as a recruitment tool. So if Program A has one person leave we could then see if Program Q would like to join the wage pilot and receive the stipend for their staff for the remaining duration.

Answer: As part of the application, the Coalition will provide GOISD/MiLEAP with your planned approach to payments (whether through the early education business or directly to individuals). If the payments are sent to the employer to distribute, and this is the approach that the Coalition decides to take, it should be outlined in the grant recipient selection criteria and communicated clearly to participating child care businesses and participants.

Question: If a Director, Owner, or other administrative staff person has to step into a teaching role during the pilot due to a lack of staff, does that person become eligible to receive the stipend as long as they have an account in MiRegistry?

Answer: Substitutions of the recipient of the monthly stipend may be considered by Coalitions in cases where there is a staff vacancy, maternity or sick leave etc. being filled by another qualifying individual, that spans for a month or longer. In these cases, the stipend would be transferred temporarily and must be clearly documented. If this is something that the Coalition decides to allow, it should be clearly outlined in the grant recipient selection criteria.

Question: Can professional development requirements be attached to educator eligibility to participate in the stipends? For example, educators must complete or be registered for X, Y, or Z professional development opportunities by A-date in order to continue qualifying for stipends?

Answer: This is not a requirement of this grant, however, if your Coalition identifies that this should be part of your criteria for selection of participants and is in alignment with your regional strategic priorities, please explain your rationale in your application for consideration.

Question: It says that pilot participants have to be in MiRegistry by January 2026. Does that mean that any staff hired during the pilot is ineligible for the stipend?

Answer: Early educators that participate in the pilot must be in MiRegistry before they receive funding.

Question: How should we explain to early educators and businesses why they were not selected to participate in the pilot?

Answer: Each Coalition should spend time clearly identifying their rationale for how they identified prioritization in alignment with their strategic goals. Communication of the Coalition's plan is the Coalition's responsibility.