



# Provider Recruitment Guide



## **GSRP Provider Recruitment Guide**

The success of Michigan's GSRP requires a healthy and robust mixed delivery system, which requires intentional collaboration between public school districts (LEAs), Head Start grantees, and nonprofit and private child-care providers (CBOs) to expand access to the Great Start Readiness Program. GSRP has multiple options for implementation, including: half day, school day, extended program, and GSRP/Head Start blended programs.

State funding is allocated to Intermediate School Districts. Funding for GSRP is appropriated annually through the state budget process. Until the State Aid Act is signed into law by the Governor each year, allocations for ISDs cannot be formally determined or awarded.

Each ISD may choose to operate programs directly and contract with partners including local school districts, and community-based organizations, like Head Start and for profit and nonprofit organizations. Legislation requires each ISD to contract at least 30% of its total allocation to community-based partner (CBO) subrecipients. ISDs unable to contract 30% of their allocation to CBOs must demonstrate to MiLEAP those specific actions taken to engage CBOs and to meet this statutory requirement.

The ISD must have a written process to distribute GSRP funding that will be impartial for all current and potential early childhood partners. The document will reflect policy and procedures to follow each year, with specific consideration of allocating funds to community partners. (*See Distribution of Funding within the ISD Administration of GSRP section of the GSPR Implementation Manual.*)

## **Great Start Readiness Program**

The local Great Start Collaborative supports the ISD with current needs assessment data that will assist in determining the capacity for the upcoming grant year, the number of eligible children, and identifying existing PreK programming in the area, to meet the local need while maintaining capacity. Therefore, when considering a new GSRP partnership it is important to determine the following:

- Existing PreK programming and providers in the area including Head Start and tuition-based programs.
- The number and location of eligible children within the area.
- The need for GSRP programming in the area.

Once a partner agency is identified, the agency signs a subrecipient contract with the ISD. The contract describes the responsibilities of both entities, including how the ISD will ensure all program requirements will be met. The ISD is responsible for monitoring subrecipients for implementation and compliance with written policies and procedures for fiscal and programmatic guidelines. ISDs must develop an unbiased and systematic approach to monitoring subrecipients for adherence to both GSRP fiscal and program requirements. A written record of such monitoring must be documented and shared with the subrecipient upon completion, and made available to Michigan Department of Lifelong Education, Advancement and Potential, as requested. *(Ref: ISD Administration of GSRP-Implementation Manual)*

### **Potential Partnerships**

The ISD is responsible for programmatic decision-making and for adherence to applicable state program requirements specified in the GSRP Implementation Manual, the ISD should consider the following points when making plans for contracting with subrecipients:

- Communication with subrecipients and families should carefully clarify that any programming for the upcoming year is dependent on the inclusion of GSRP funding within the State School Aid Act.
- When working with subrecipients to determine start dates, ISDs should consider anticipated funding for the upcoming program year.

When recruiting new subrecipient partners, ISDs must work closely with Great Start to Quality and Michigan Lifelong Education, Advancement and Potential Adult and Child Licensing, to determine qualifications of potential partnerships.

For potential new partnerships, establish and communicate your shared philosophy and mission, as it provides a solid foundation for growing the partnership. The first ten steps in recruiting new subrecipients:

- Set incremental growth goals that are realistic. Remember that systemic change is a process.
- Identify the benefits of GSRP partnership for children and families.
- Connect the partnership to a commitment to quality.
- Consider community representation. Identify partners that serve all the diverse populations in the county.
- Build relationships with local school districts, Head Start grantees, and other community-based organizations.
- Utilize social media platforms and other communication strategies that are accessed by childcare providers.
- Think of innovative strategies for engaging potential partnerships with licensed childcare providers.
- Invest time and support in childcare centers that may not be fully ready for implementation but are working toward achieving that goal.

### **Beginning the Recruitment Process**

Develop a strategic, comprehensive process to identify childcare providers to complete a selection process for potential subrecipients. Engage Great Start to Quality, the Regional Resource Center, Head Start grantees, and Childcare licensing to assist with outreach and engagement.

Offer opportunities and encourage childcare providers to ask questions about the benefits of Great Start Readiness Program partnerships and GSRP/Head Start Blend options for Head Start agencies. Ideas for connecting with potential community-based partners include:

- Connect with Great Start to Quality for a list of rated childcare providers in your service area.
- Connect with regional Head Start grantees.
- Create dedicated marketing strategies to engage with potential partners for a one-to-one meeting.
- Plan and hold GSRP information sessions.
- Create a potential partner video to share electronically.
- Utilize social media and other media tools to communicate the benefits of partnering with GSRP.

When connecting with potential partners, aim to build a partnership of engagement, confidence, and communication. Clearly communicate flexibility and available options for subrecipients, including:

- Braided funding in multi-age rooms
- Braided funding with tuition and Head Start children
- Blended Head Start/GSRP classrooms
- The different GSRP program options and calendars, including Extended GSRP

With the potential partner, determine the best options that would meet their organizational needs, while highlighting the benefits of GSRP. Include opportunities for observation, assessment, curriculum, and individualization. Describe how inclusion is supported in all GSRP classrooms. Share with the prospective partner that GSRP funding is based on children enrolled in programming and is not a direct pay out of funds. An information packet or folder of program requirements will be helpful to share with any interested organization.

### **Next Steps**

All interested prospective partners should complete an interest/application form. The information the ISD may want to collect as potential partners are considered:

- Name of Center (as listed on license)
- Address/Phone#/Website
- Director's Name and Contact Information

- Licensed Capacity
- Licensed PreK Capacity
- Status of License (Original Provisional, Regular, Provisional)
- Ages Served
- Hours and Days of Operation
- Current level in Great Start to Quality

**Additional information to consider:**

- Ensure that prospective partner understands that funding is based upon enrollment?
- Is the center located in an area of need? Are there unserved, eligible children that live near or attend the center?
- Does the center currently participate in the CDC childcare scholarship program?
- Does the potential partner provide wraparound care for families that need additional hours/days of care?
- Does the provider provide transportation?
- Is the program willing to support the ongoing engagement with an Early Childhood Specialist for the GSRP classroom(s)?

Early Childhood Specialists (ECS) provide ongoing coaching, evaluate the local program structure, processes, and outcomes to document program effectiveness: they support the GSRP teaching team for continuous quality improvement.

Once a decision has been made to move to the next step of qualification, check current license status and set up a time to visit the site and utilize the GSRP readiness rubric and checklist. It is important to remind the prospective partner that this is an application process; and funding is not guaranteed.

The rubric and checklist assist the Early Childhood Contact in determining the readiness of the site in offering GSRP programming. The scoring of the rubric provides a guideline for placement on a wait list for becoming a GSRP program in the future. If a potential site does not currently demonstrate GSRP readiness, the ISD should consider mentoring the provider to prepare them for future partnership. This can be done in partnership with the Great Start Collaborative, Great

Start to Quality and by providing curriculum and assessment support, professional development for staff and fiscal training for administration.

## **Memorandum of Understanding**

The purpose of a Memorandum of Understanding is to provide an overview of factors to consider when developing, implementing, and sustaining partnerships to create a coordinated approach to service delivery to improve outcomes for young children. The development of strong, effective partnerships can be challenging. One barrier can be the lack of understanding of each early childhood program's requirements. A Memorandum of Understanding may be used as an initial document to inform potential partner(s) that funding is not guaranteed and partnership with GSRP is not guaranteed.

## **Final Step**

When you are ready to onboard your new partner, a contract will be completed acknowledging your new subrecipient and the implementation of the GSRP requirements documented in the Great Start Readiness Implementation Manual.

[GSRP Implementation Manual \(Michigan.gov\)](#)