

Additional Smart Start FAQs

43) When must capital expense funds that are awarded for the 2014-2015 funding year be spent by?

Funds awarded for capital expenses for the 2014-2015 funding year must be expended by the start of the school year. A program may apply for an extension if the capital improvements cannot be completed prior to the school year, and the portion of the capital funds not expended will not compromise the health or safety of the children attending the Smart Start program (e.g. all classroom improvements have been made, but playground improvements are in process and the children have an alternate outdoor space available to them until the playground improvements are completed.) The OEC will not approve extension requests, except those with very compelling circumstances and detailed documentation.

44) Is a local or regional board of education eligible for reimbursement through the public school transportation grant for children enrolled in Smart Start?

Yes. Smart Start students transported to public schools within the town's borders are eligible for funding through the public transportation grant.

45) Is the Smart Start RFP available as a MS Word document?

No. You will need Adobe or another similar program to enter information directly onto the RFP form. You may want to fill the parts out in MS Word and then copy and paste into the final PDF application.

46) Can a regional board of education locate a Smart Start classroom in a town served by the regional board of education that is not identified as having an unmet need?

Yes. The regional board of education will need to identify the reason for the location of the program and how the children from the towns identified as having an unmet need will access the program.

47) Can a regional board of education serve children from a town not identified as having an unmet need?

Yes. The regional board of education must provide a methodology for determining why there is an unmet need for the children's town of residence as well as extensive supporting data.

48) If the district is expanding its existing preK by adding Smart Start classrooms, can it determine that priority for Smart Start seats will be given to 4-year-olds?

No. The Smart Start grant must serve 3- and 4-year olds.

49) When "collaborating with community and governmental agencies to provide services when school is not in session," what is meant by "services"?

The local or regional board of education is expected to develop a plan for children to have access to child care when school is not in session (i.e. summer, holidays, school vacations, snow days).

Does this include child care and/or instructional services? The plan must address child care and may address instructional services.

Does it need to be at no cost to the family? No

Are families required to use these services? No

50) Are there page limits for the application, line/margin or font requirements?

No. We encourage applicants to be succinct.

51) If a Smart Start PreK classroom opens in an elementary school with kindergarten, do the kindergarten classrooms need to become NAEYC accredited?

No. The kindergarten classrooms have a separate public identity from the preschool classrooms and are not required to be included under the Smart Start PreK classroom accreditation. Although kindergarten classrooms do need not to be/become NAEYC accredited, the local or regional board of education's preK-3rd grade plan is required as part of the Smart Start funding application. The accreditation self-study process for kindergarten may be included as part of the application's preK-3rd grade plan. The inclusion of other preK classrooms in the same building as the Smart Start funded program is addressed in question 21 of the [Smart Start FAQs published 11/12/2014](#).

52) What are the dates for funding that this application covers?

Successful applicants will be approved for two years of operations funding (FY 2015-2016 and FY 2016-2017) and must submit applications for approval of continued funding for the remainder of the five-year period. Successful applicants for capital improvements will be approved for one-time funding for a specific classroom that should be available in late spring and expended to insure that the Smart Start classroom meets quality standards for the opening of school in fall 2015.

53) What documentation is required from the Board of Education for approval?

Only a signature of the Board of Education chairperson is required.

54) Is there a percentage requirement for children that are dual language learners (DLLs) or children who qualify for free or reduced fee lunch?

No. There is not a requirement for the percentage of DLL children enrolled in a Smart Start classroom. The local or regional board of education should have a plan for prioritizing children who are DLL for enrollment. Preference for funding will be given to local or regional boards of education that allocate at least 60 percent of Smart Start spaces to children who are members of families that are at or below 75 percent of the state median income, or 50 percent of the spaces to children who are eligible for free or reduced fee lunches.

55) Is a local or regional board of education required to meet the minimum percentage of children with an IEP (must be the same percentage as K-12 special education enrollment)?

Yes. The percentage of pre-k children with an IEP must meet or exceed the percentage of K-12 students enrolled in special education in the district to receive Smart Start funding.

56) If we do not apply before the current application deadline of December 19, 2014 will there be a future opportunity to apply for Smart Start funds?

Yes. We anticipate that Smart Start funding will be available for 10 years (within available appropriations). Refer to p. 6 of the Smart Start RFP. A new RFP will be issued in future years; there is no need for a letter of intent.

57) Is a local or regional board of education required to submit a letter of intent regarding future applications for funding?

No.