



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

A Memo from the New Jersey Department of Education

Date: May 1, 2024
To: Chief School Administrators
Route To: School Business Administrators, School Facility Managers
From: Secil Onat, Assistant Commissioner
Division of Finance & Business Services

NJDOE Announces \$33 Million for Preschool Facilities Expansion Projects

The Fiscal Year 2023 annual appropriations act includes a \$120 million allocation of federal Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Fund (SFRF) dollars that were established pursuant to the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARP) for the expansion of preschool facilities. In March 2023, the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) [announced](#) the first round of available grants to support this initiative. An additional grant opportunity is now being made available to regular operating school districts totaling \$33 million to support preschool facilities expansion projects.

Eligibility

Under the Preschool Facilities Expansion program, regular operating districts (ROD) are eligible to receive at a minimum 40 percent of approved eligible project costs. The funding percentage for a grant is based upon each district's District Aid Percentage (DAP) multiplied by the eligible project costs established by NJDOE. Districts must be able to demonstrate local matching funds for the balance of the project costs.

Approvable projects would be limited to those that expand a current educational facility (adding preschool classrooms/seats) and renovations of existing facilities with limitations. Specifically, these will only be allowed if the district can demonstrate sufficient capacity for other grades and that the renovation would result in a net increase in available preschool seats.

Project Prioritization

For Preschool Expansion projects to be considered for grant funding, the proposed scope of work must be 100 percent eligible for State support and be included in one of the priorities listed below. Once a project has been determined by the NJDOE to be 100 percent eligible in scope, it will be categorized in one of the listed project areas. If the proposed scope of work is applicable to more than one project area, the project will be placed in the lower sub-ranking priority.

Projects that would require a referendum to raise the local share will not be considered at this time. For districts seeking projects that would require a local referendum, Debt Service Aid is available to provide state support for projects through NJDOE.

Project Priority List

1. *Increase in Number of Available Preschool Seats:*

First priority will be given to projects that demonstrate the districts' ability to increase the number available preschool seats by adding at least 10% of the district's landscape. Projects will be ranked within this priority category by percentage of increase compared to other applications. Projects include, but are not limited to, construction of additional preschool classrooms in existing school buildings.

2. *Facility Enhancements:*

Projects in this priority level include but are not limited to rehabilitation of existing preschool classrooms to meet square footage requirements tiered at 950 square feet, 750 square feet, and 700 square feet, and construction or rehabilitation of toilet rooms in classrooms.

3. *Transition to Full-Day Programs:*

Projects that support the expansion of half day programs in existing ECPA/ELLI districts to full day programs meeting the NJDOE's facility requirements.

4. *New Preschool Programs:*

Projects that include expansion of existing school buildings or rehabilitation of existing classrooms that would ultimately house new preschool programs (guaranteeing future seats).

Application Timeline

Preschool Expansion Projects Open Application Period is May 1, 2024, to June 3, 2024. All approved projects must be completed no later than August 31, 2026.

A complete project application must be received by the NJDOE via the Electronic Web Enabled Grants system (EWEG) by 5 p.m. on June 3, 2024, to be considered for grant funding. It is recommended that districts submit their application prior to this deadline. Please refer to the Office of School Facilities Projects ([OSFP web page](#)) for more information on the submission process, including the project application and transmittal requirements.

C: Members, State Board of Education
 NJDOE Staff
 Statewide Parent Advocacy Network
 Garden State Coalition of Schools
 NJ LEE Group