

FY16 Shared Visions Preschool Application

Frequently Asked Questions

This document has been developed to guide interested applicants and existing grantees in the implementation of a Shared Visions Preschool Program. All questions received during the FY16 competitive application process are addressed within this document.

The following categories were developed to assist in the use of this document:

- I. Application Requirements/Information
- II. Technical Requirements
- III. Application Completion
- IV. Funding/Budgets
- V. Program Requirements

*Each of the main categories have subcategories listed in the left column to expedite the location of content areas.

Shared Visions Preschool Application Questions/Answers

I. Application Requirements/Information

Timelines/General

1. How many grants will be awarded?

A: All grant awards are contingent upon the 2015 legislative appropriation. The number of grants to be awarded will be determined based on quality of grant application, established need, and available funding.

2. What timeframe is covered by the grant?

A: The funding period for FY16 is July 1, 2015 – June 30, 2016. Grants will be awarded with projected intent to renew, for a maximum of five years, provided grantees meet program requirements. Funding will be allocated in one year increments based on annual legislated appropriations (funding may vary each year pending state budget allocation decisions).

3. What is the deadline for submitting an application?

A: Applications must be submitted through IowaGrants.gov by 4:30 pm, January 20, 2015. The timeline for the application process may be found on the [Shared Visions Preschool Program webpage](#) in the *Awarded Locations and Application* section.

4. What time is the webinar on December 5, 2014?

A: The webinar will be recorded and posted on December 5, 2014. A link to the recorded webinar will be located in the *Timeline* chart on the [Shared Visions Preschool Program webpage](#). Potential applicants are encouraged to review the webinar prior to completing an application.

The webinar will be prerecorded and posted on the site before the end of the day on Friday, December 5, 2014.

5. Will a letter of intent be required before submitting the application for Shared Visions funding?

A: No, a letter of intent is not requested or required.

Applicant Eligibility

1. Who is eligible to apply?

A: Any existing or current grantee, public school, non-profit licensed child care center, Head Start agency, community action agency, or other public, non-profit agency may apply. It is required that applicants meet requirements as outlined in [Iowa Code section 256A](#) and [281-Iowa Administrative Code 64](#).

2. We are a for-profit daycare center that serves many low income families. Are we eligible to apply for the grant on our own or possibly as part of the local school district?

A: Eligible applicants include any public school, non-profit licensed child care center, Head Start agency, community action agency, or other public, non-profit agency. A for-profit organization is not considered eligible to apply.

3. We are currently under the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program as a private partner preschool and wonder if we are able to apply for Shared Visions Preschool funding.

A: Eligible applicants include any public school, non-profit licensed child care center, Head Start agency, community action agency, or other public, non-profit agency. If an applicant plans to utilize SWVPP funding and Shared Visions Preschool Program funding for the same classroom, it must ensure an eligible child is not funded by both funding sources for the same portion of the day.

4. We do not have 80% of our enrollment that is 130% of poverty or lower, but have around 50%. Are we eligible for the grant?

A: An applicant with less than 80% of a classroom meeting income guidelines is still eligible to apply. The application would address the number of children who meet the income guidelines in a braided program model. The application budget would correspond to the number of children meeting primary and secondary eligibility criteria.

5. What is the free and reduced lunch percentage to qualify for a grant?

A: Applicants are asked to provide an analysis of the service area related to poverty levels, including an estimate of the numbers of families whose income is 130% or less of the Federal Poverty Guidelines. Applicants should refer to the Federal Poverty Guidelines 2014 posted on the [Shared Visions Preschool Program webpage](#) in the *Awarded Locations and Application* section. Points will be awarded based on the quality of evidence provided regarding the level of need in the service area and the number of families meeting income eligibility.

6. Do you know if the Preschool Program grant is something I can apply for to do Teacher Child Interaction Training in a school district?

A: The Shared Visions Preschool Program funds are not intended to support training or professional development for a group of teachers as suggested in the question. A portion of an awarded grant may support the professional development of staff members providing direct services to eligible children (teachers and assistant teachers). The Shared Visions Preschool Program funds require a program to provide a comprehensive quality preschool program experience for children at-risk who are ages three to five years. Services must be center-based and eligible applicants include any existing or current grantee, public school, non-profit licensed child care center, Head Start agency, community action agency, or other public, non-profit agency. It is required that applicants meet requirements as outlined in [Iowa Code section 256A](#) and [281-Iowa Administrative Code 64](#). A few of the expectations of awarded applicants include:

- Enroll no fewer than 80% of age-eligible children who are from families at or below 130% of the federal poverty guideline (primary eligibility: 281-Iowa Administrative Code 64.7),
- Enroll no more than 20% of age-eligible children based on other at-risk factors (secondary eligibility: 281-Iowa Administrative Code 64.8),
- Achieve and maintain accreditation from [National Association for the Education of Young Children](#),
- Maintain a classroom ratio of 1 adult for every 8 children, and
- Maintain an agreement with *Teaching Strategies, Inc.* under the *GOLD* State Service Umbrella Agreement and complete three state-determined checkpoints with all enrolled children.

Location of Services

1. Can we write one grant for two locations?

A: Applications must be site specific. Applicants who wish to provide services in multiple locations or sites must submit an application for each site. While information from one application may be used for the basis of another site application, proposals and narratives would be tailored to meet the specific needs of the selected community and service area.

Ages Served

1. Is the grant for 3- to 5-year-olds or is there a provision for children ages birth to three-years-old as well?

A: This grant is for the FY16 Shared Visions Preschool Program and may be used to serve children ages three- to five-years-old. There is a separate funding opportunity that may be considered to provide services to families with children aged birth to five-years-old with priority given to programs serving families with children aged birth to three-years-old. Please refer to the [Shared Visions Parent Program web page](#) for information regarding this opportunity.

2. If we choose one age group for the application, do we need to stick to the age group or can we serve a different age group if the need arises?

A: A grantee may direct the use of funds received to serve any qualifying child ranging in age from three-years-old to five-years-old, regardless of the age of population indicated on the grant request in its initial year of application. A grantee is encouraged to consider the degree to

which the program complements existing programs and services for children at-risk available in the area, including other child care and preschool services, services provided through a school district, and services available through an area education agency.

Current (FY15) Shared Visions Grantees

1. Do I have to apply if I am a current grantee?

A: Yes, any program interested in operating a Shared Visions Preschool Program in FY16, July 2015 – June 2016, will need to apply for funding. This includes programs that were previously awarded funding and who are currently providing a Shared Visions Preschool Program. Funding for the program is limited; therefore, the application process is highly competitive and it is likely that not all applicants will receive funding.

2. For clarification, if a district who currently has Shared Visions Preschool funding does not apply for the FY16 grant, will they lose their funding for next year?

A: Current Shared Visions Preschool grantees awarded funds for grant year FY15 (July 1, 2014 – June 30, 2015) will not lose those funds. They will not automatically receive a renewal grant for FY16 (July 1, 2015 – June 30, 2016). If interested in continuing to operate a Shared Visions Preschool Program in FY16, current grantees must submit a competitive application. Due to limited funding, it is highly likely that not all applications will be awarded.

3. Do current grantees get preference for renewal status?

A: No. There are no additional points awarded or preference given to current (FY15) Shared Visions Preschool grantees in the FY16 application process. All applications received will be scored in the same manner using the *Rubric of Scoring Criteria – FY16 Shared Visions Preschool Application* located on the [Shared Visions Preschool Program webpage](#) in the *Awarded Locations and Application* section.

4. If I currently have more than one grant, but all services are provided from the same location, do I need to write multiple grants? Can I combine the current grants into one application?

A: It is allowable to combine current grants into one application if the location of services will be the same for FY16. For example, if you have three grants that fund three separate classrooms all located within the same building, you can write one application for FY16 to request funding for these three classrooms. If you have three grants for three separate classrooms that are located in three different buildings, you would need to write three applications (one for each location) to request funding in FY16 for these three classrooms.

5. We are a current grantee and are wondering if we should write for the same dollar amount we currently receive or if there is a new amount. Can you clarify?

A: Current grantees are not limited to write for the same amount as their FY15 grant award. An applicant should write for an amount that they anticipate will cover the costs of the proposed program while meeting the required 20% in-kind match.

6. **We are a current grantee. When starting the applications, will they all be new or can we move some of the information over with the copy and paste? Or are they all new grants so they wouldn't have the same information numbers?**

A: All applications for FY16 are new applications and should be started as a new application rather than using the option to copy an existing application. However, you are able to paste information from another source or a Word document into each narrative section of the application.

II. Technical Requirements

Online Application System

1. **How do I complete an application?**

A: The FY16 Shared Visions Preschool Application must be submitted to the Department of Education through the online grant application system, IowaGrants.gov. Instructions for registering in IowaGrants.gov and completing the application can be found on the [Shared Visions Preschool Program webpage](#) in the *Awarded Locations and Application* section.

2. **How do I register in Iowa Grants?**

A: Directions can be found on the [Shared Visions Preschool Program webpage](#) in the *Awarded Locations and Application* section within the document titled *Instructions for Registering in IowaGrants.gov*.

3. **Can I access a paper copy of the application somehow?**

A: A paper copy of the application is not available since it is being submitted through IowaGrants.gov. Once you have logged into the Iowa Grants system and are looking at the list of Application Forms, you can open each form to view the content that is being requested. This is located in the *Instructions* section at the top of each application form. You can also select *Print* from this page as well which will provide all of the questions in the application. However, it will not include the *Instructions* section from each of the application forms. Please note, paper copies of this application will not be accepted.

4. **We need to have more than one person working on different parts of the application. Is this possible?**

A: More than one person can be associated with an application. Once the application has been created, additional individuals can be tied to the application upon request. It is important to designate **one person** to create the application, regardless of whether multiple people will assist with the content. All individuals tied to a given application have access to all portions of the application. If multiple people will be assisting with completing the various forms, it is important to clarify the role of each. Contact Amy Stegeman at amy.stegeman@iowa.gov to request additional persons be linked to an application.

5. **How do I delete an application that was started but is no longer needed?**

A: To delete an application started in the Iowa Grants application system, contact Amy Stegeman at amy.stegeman@iowa.gov. You will need to provide the ID number associated with the application (located in the *ID* column on the left side of the page). The application will be withdrawn and will no longer be available for completion or submission. All applications an organization does not intend to submit should be withdrawn.

- 6. I started an application and the General Information page of the application shows a list of people from our agency in the *Additional Contacts* section when in editing mode. I did not add these people to the application. Why would they appear and can they be removed?**

A: The additional contacts section will list all persons tied to the organization within the system. To attach someone to your grant application, you would need to select and highlight a name. If a name is not highlighted, that person is not connected to the application and will not be able to access it. Names that are highlighted can be selected to remove the highlighting and the connection to the application if desired.

- 7. Can I still edit my application once I have selected *Mark As Complete* for a section?**

A: Yes, you can edit each section of the application until it has been submitted.

- 8. Can you cut and paste into a section if you feel a graph might explain it better than words?**

A: Yes, you are able to paste information from another source, such as a Word document, into each narrative section of the application. There is also a tool bar at the top of each narrative section that allows you to create tables, insert images, and more. It is important to note that tables, graphs and images may take up a large number of characters available in each section.

III. Application Completion

Writing the Application

- 1. Is there any guidance available for writing the application?**

A: All guidance documents, as well as links to the corresponding Iowa Code and Iowa Administrative Code, may be found on the [Shared Visions Preschool Program webpage](#). The guidance document titled *Rubric of Scoring Criteria – FY16 Shared Visions Preschool Application* should be reviewed. Quality applications will address all components of the scoring rubric.

- 2. Is there a limited number of words for each section allowed when completing the online application?**

A: Each narrative section within the online application has a maximum number of characters allowed. All application questions requesting a narrative answer, with the exception of those in the *Program Summary* form, have a maximum of 10,000 characters. This is approximately 2-3 pages of a Word document when done in Times New Roman font at size 12. The narrative questions in the *Program Summary* section of the application have a character limit of 5500. Please note that spaces and punctuation are included in the character count.

- 3. Will we lose points if we have fewer than 16 children who meet income qualifications? Or shall we write the grant for the 10 children who meet income qualifications rather than for 16 children?**

A: The grant should be written to address the needs of the community and service area. The budget submitted with the application would correspond to the number of children meeting primary and secondary eligibility criteria. A classroom may braid funding sources to serve additional children while only a portion qualify for Shared Visions funding based on primary (income) or secondary (other at-risk factors defined in Chapter 64) eligibility. For example, an applicant submits a plan to serve a total of 16 children in one classroom with a total of 12 children being supported by the Shared Visions Preschool Program grant. Of these 12 children, at least 10 must be eligible based on income eligibility (80%), and no more than 2 children could be enrolled in the classroom based on other risk factors (20%). The other 4 children enrolled to create a class size of 16 would need to be at full pay or funded by other sources (not supported by the Shared Visions Preschool Program grant). The application would describe the classroom make-up and funding sources. Points are awarded based on the scoring rubric. No part of the scoring rubric deletes points for an applicant who chooses to serve children using multiple funding sources.

[See the Funding/Budgets category for more information.]

- 4. Can you upload other supporting documents such as a QRS rating or DHS license? If so, where can this be done?**

A: There are areas built into sections of the application where an applicant can upload specific documents. Additional areas to upload documents cannot be created by the applicant. However, an applicant may choose to describe items such as the QRS rating or DHS license in a narrative section of the application.

- 5. We are trying to locate the alignment document between *Teaching Strategies* GOLD and the Iowa Early Learning Standards. Do you know where we can find it?**

A: An alignment document between *Teaching Strategies* GOLD and the Iowa Early Learning Standards can be found on the [Iowa page](#) of the *Teaching Strategies* GOLD website. There is an alignment dated 2014 toward the bottom of the page.

Application Forms

- 1. Our current programing is one where teachers loop with the students. For example a teacher who currently teaches 3-year-olds would then have them next year as 4-year-olds. For the purpose of this application, would it be okay if we leave the staff member's names blank?**

A: The application would indicate the staff members who would be responsible for the program during FY16. Even in the circumstance where teachers loop with children, the names of staff members, if currently hired, are required for the application. If different staff members will represent the classroom or children served by the grant in subsequent years, this would be reported in the renewal application.

- 2. For the *Service Description Plan*, it asks for "persons responsible" for providing the service. Does that mean an agency, a person's name or the title of the person, such as a teacher?**

A: Identifying the person responsible for various services may be done by providing the title of the person. If necessary for clarity of the proposed services, a description of that position may be included. It is important to provide enough detail that it is evident that the program has the capacity to provide the services described in the application.

- 3. Under the *Other Resources and Services* section of the application, the 2nd and 3rd questions on the scoring rubric state that the question is fully addressed in the preschool program plan. Can you clarify what this means? Is there a “Preschool Program Plan” that we are to submit as well?**

A: The scoring rubric for these two questions use the following statement in the column for 4 points: *Evidence of needed resources are extensively described and will be fully addressed in the preschool program plan.* This is not the name of a document or separate item that needs submitted. This refers to the overall plan for services described by the program submitting the application. In other words, the applicant will describe whether there is a need for transportation or child care for participating families and then describe if this need will be addressed through services provided by this grant.

- 4. What does “Community Collaboration and Letters of Support” entail? Does it include any or all of the following: pulling in community partners such as Fire Fighters for fire safety week, referring families to community resources for things like winter clothing or food, encouraging clubs or organizations to come into the school and do free screenings such as hearing or dental, and partnering with nursing homes to provide entertainment to their residents?**

A: To address the Community Collaboration and Letters of Support section, applicants are encouraged to refer to the *Rubric of Scoring Criteria – FY16 Shared Visions Preschool Application* which is located on the [Shared Visions Preschool Program webpage](#) in the *Awarded Locations and Application* section. Community collaboration will include how the program can integrate existing community resources, how local resources will be accessed, any direct services from community members or agencies to be provided to participants of program, and how existing programs and services to children at-risk in the area will be complemented. It may include how the curriculum and learning experiences of students will be extended by community involvement in the program or the sharing of local resources to meet the needs of children and families served.

- 5. How many letters of support would be adequate? Do those letters need to be from businesses that have partnered with the preschool or can it be from any business in the community?**

A: It is recommended that applicants refer to the Community Collaboration and Letters of Support section of the scoring rubric to make these determinations. The *Rubric of Scoring Criteria – FY16 Shared Visions Preschool Application* is located on the [Shared Visions Preschool Program webpage](#) in the *Awarded Locations and Application* section.

- 6. For the purposes of letters of support, would the AEA be considered a community agency?**

A: Yes, a letter of support from the AEA describing services to be provided is permissible.

7. **On the *Assurances* page, I do not see that you can upload a signature. Does the person just need to type a signature on that page?**

A: Yes, an electronic signature is requested on the assurances page of the application. This is completed by typing the name into the designated space of the online form.

8. **Should the total amount of the proposed budget appear at the top of the page next to *Requested Total*?**

A: No, this will not show an amount related to the proposed budget being submitted. You will see the total amount of the proposed budget near the bottom of the page next to *Total Budget and Amount Requested*.

9. **Is there a pre-determined amount we should enter into the budget or do we submit a budget based on our program's costs?**

A: There is not a pre-determined amount that should be entered into the budget. An applicant should write for an amount that they anticipate will cover the costs of the proposed program while meeting the required 20% in-kind match.

10. **Regarding the program advisory committee, who must it consist of and what percentage of it must be families?**

A: The creation and composition of a program advisory committee are local decisions. Applicants are encouraged to review the **Program Evaluation** section of the *Rubric of Scoring Criteria – FY16 Shared Visions Preschool Application* located on the [Shared Visions Preschool Program webpage](#) in the *Awarded Locations and Application* section for further guidance.

11. **Can you please explain how to complete the general classroom information section of the application when the program will use braided funding sources? Please specifically address the following scenarios:**

- **The total class size will be 16, but only 8 of the slots will be filled by children eligible for Shared Visions and the other students will be paying tuition. In the classroom section do we indicate 16 students in the classroom or 8?**

A: There are two places where you indicate the number of children to be served. The first asks for the estimated number of funded children by age and you would indicate those children who will be supported by Shared Visions funding. In the scenario above, you would indicate 8 children by the anticipated age. The second asks for a Maximum Class Size and provides the following guidance within the form: *This is the maximum number of children that will be in attendance at one time. Report ALL children to be served, including those NOT funded by the Shared Visions Grant.* Therefore, based on the scenario above, you would indicate 16 children.

- **The program will be linked with Statewide Voluntary Preschool which will provide 3.25 hours per day while the combined Shared Visions/paid tuition will provide 3.25 hours per day. In the classroom description do we only include the 3.25 hours or indicate 6.5 hours per day of programming?**

A: You would indicate 6.5 hours per day of programming since that is the total amount of time per day that a student can be in attendance. You would then describe the classroom and the braiding of funding sources in the Description of Funding box in this section.

Submission

1. Do you only need to complete the application or do you need to send it once it is done?

A: Once an application is completed, it must be submitted (or sent) through the Iowa Grants system. These instructions can be found in the document titled *Instructions for Completing the FY16 Shared Visions Preschool Application (specifically steps 18-22)* located on the [Shared Visions Preschool Program webpage](#) in the *Awarded Locations and Application* section. No paper copies will be accepted.

IV. Funding/Budgets

General Guidance

1. Is there a per pupil cap for the budget?

A: Budgets must follow the guidance as outlined in the Shared Visions Preschool 2015-2016 Budget Guidance document located on the [Shared Visions Preschool Program webpage](#) in the *Awarded Locations and Application* section. The guidance is also an attachment to the Shared Visions Preschool application located in IowaGrants.gov and embedded in the instructions within the budget form. There is not a per pupil cap noted in the guidance.

2. How much funding is typically received for a grant?

A: The amount received for a grant will correlate to the number of participants to be served and the comprehensive services the grantee plans to provide. Therefore, awarded amounts will vary. All awards are contingent upon the annual state appropriation.

3. If we apply for full funding for a classroom, within reason, could partial funding be given over no funding at all?

A: Yes, the Department has the authority to review and approve budgets submitted in an application in order to negotiate a final contract.

4. In budgeting for salaries and benefits, our program typically settles for a 3-4% increase each year. How do I budget for this increase after year one of the grant?

A: All grant awards are contingent upon the annual legislative appropriation. FY16 grants will be awarded for one year with a renewal option for up to five years provided grantees meet program requirements. The awarded amount for each subsequent year will be the same as that of FY16 unless there are changes to the legislative appropriation or a grantee reverts funds back to the state. Awarded grantees will submit a proposed budget annually and may choose to make adjustments to amounts across budget lines as long as the total budget equals the awarded allocation and it adheres to all budget guidance. Any anticipated salary increases that

are beyond the awarded allocation would need to be covered in other ways such as the 20% in-kind requirement.

5. If secondary funding is available for tuition costs, can we maintain these resources?

A: Yes, these resources can be maintained. Any secondary or additional funding generated from tuition cost may be used at the discretion of the grantee to support the Shared Visions Preschool Program.

6. Can we charge families based on income as we do now?

A: Tuition or fees may not be charged to children and families enrolled based on primary eligibility (income eligibility). Children enrolled based on secondary eligibility (other risk factors) and who are above the income eligibility guidelines may be served on a sliding fee schedule determined at the local level. The program may include children not at risk (not eligible based on income or other risk factors), provided they are at full pay and meet age requirements. Grant funding may not support children who attend the program who are not at-risk. However, these children must be considered when determining the requirements for class size maximum and child-teacher ratio.

Braiding Funds

1. Is it allowable for children funded by other sources to participate in the Shared Visions Preschool classroom?

A: A grantee may braid funding sources as long as two funding sources do not support the same child during the same time.

2. We are planning to braid funding and have Shared Visions qualifying children attend with Statewide Voluntary children and children on IEPs. We plan for these children to be in the same classroom and attend either an am or pm session. We will maintain an 8 to 1 ratio and a class size that meets NAEYC. Can we braid our funding this way?

A: Yes, an agency may braid funding in this way as long as there is no supplanting of funds. A child may not be supported by two funding sources during the same portion of the day. It is also allowable to expand the preschool day for children by braiding funding sources. An awarded applicant is required to maintain accurate accounting records of revenues and expenditures, as well as ensure that the use of funds is appropriate for each funding source. Additionally, any expenditures from special education funding must be consistent with the guidance posted on the Department's website.

Budget Categories/Allowable Expenditures

1. Can we use funding for salaries or operating expenses?

A: Funding can be used for salaries and operating expenses as long as it follows the guidelines provided in the *Shared Visions Preschool 2015-2016 Budget Guidance* located on the [Shared Visions Preschool Program webpage](#) in the *Awarded Locations and Application* section. Funding requested for salaries shall be for personnel providing direct preschool services to the children involved with the program and for the percentage of time employed to provide services for the Shared Visions Preschool Program. Applicants may include requests for funding of

operating expenses in the *Other Expenses* section of the budget form. The total amount of this line item may not exceed 10% of the total grant award.

- 2. Instead of taking children to community sites, our preschool programs utilize outside programs like the zoo, science center, or artists who come into the classrooms. Can this be included in the budget under *Purchased Services*?**

A: The budget section related to Purchased Services may include contracting for outside services from other agencies as described in this question.

- 3. Can we include district or agency door-to-door busing rather than outside transportation services in the *Purchased Services* section of the budget?**

A: Yes, purchased services may include transportation costs for eligible children. The applicant must ensure that transportation services provided adhere to the requirements and regulations of the applicant agency.

- 4. Where does transportation fall in the budget guidance?**

A: Applicants should refer to the *Shared Visions Preschool 2015-2016 Budget Guidance* located on the [Shared Visions Preschool Program webpage](#) in the *Awarded Locations and Application* section. Transportation is listed as an example of an expense under Purchased Services. Applicants may also consider including it in the Other Expenses section of the budget.

- 5. Under the Salaries & Benefits/Employee Fringe Benefits section of the Budget Guidance, you address that IRA's may not be purchased with grant funds. However, would Employer match dollars for retirement plan 403(b) plan for direct preschool services staff qualify?**

A: Yes, employer's retirement fund contribution for the employee can be covered with these funds.

V. Program Requirements

NAEYC Accreditation

- 1. Are there required program standards?**

A: Accreditation through the [National Association for the Education of Young Children \(NAEYC\)](#) is required. New programs not currently accredited shall participate in the accreditation process of NAEYC during the programs' first year of funding and will be granted a waiver of accreditation during that year. Programs must attain accreditation during their second year of funding. Programs that do not attain accreditation during year two or do not receive a waiver will not be funded for renewal. Programs currently accredited shall participate in the renewal process and maintain accreditation with NAEYC. Programs unable to maintain accreditation or that do not receive a waiver will not be funded. Refer to [281-64.15\(2\)](#) and [281-64.15\(3\)](#) for more detailed information.

2. If programs do not obtain NAEYC Accreditation during their second year of funding, can they get an extension?

A: Programs not able to attain accreditation during their second year may apply for a waiver of accreditation by March 15 of the current fiscal year. Waivers shall be granted at the discretion of the Department under the advisement of the Child Development Coordinating Council. Programs that do not attain accreditation or receive a waiver will not receive funding the following fiscal year.

3. Do applicants have to be currently following NAEYC Program Standards?

A: Applicants are asked to submit a plan for obtaining NAEYC Accreditation if they are not currently accredited.

4. Is NAEYC Accreditation required for ALL programs in the district?

A: NAEYC Accreditation is only required for those classrooms that are serving children funded by the Shared Visions Preschool Program grant.

Staff Qualifications

1. Do the teachers have to have a teaching license?

A: Programs must be accredited through the NAEYC. Therefore, [NAEYC staff qualifications](#) are the minimum requirement.

Ratio/Class Size

1. What is the required ratio?

A: Any classroom serving children funded by Shared Visions Preschool Grants must maintain a child-teacher ratio of not less than one staff member per eight children.

2. Are we allowed to serve 20 children by placing 16 Shared Visions children and 4 Head Start children in the same classroom?

A: A teacher-child ratio of 1 staff member per 8 children is required. If a classroom serves 20 children, three staff members would be needed to maintain the required ratio. Classrooms must also follow NAEYC requirements regarding class size maximum while considering the ages of the children served.

3. Our program currently operates three Shared Visions 4-year-old classrooms that partner with Iowa's Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program (SWVPP). The additional funding from the Voluntary Preschool Program has allowed the Shared Visions classrooms to expand their day. Our local SWVPP requires 20 students in each classroom instead of 16. For this application we are planning on maintaining this partnership with the SWVPP in order to help with additional funding. Do we have to maintain the 1:8 ratio required by Shared Visions during all hours of operation or just during the hours that have been designated as the Shared Visions portion of the day? The Voluntary Preschool Program requires us to meet NAEYC ratio requirements which is a 1:10 when class size is 20.

A: An agency may braid funding as long as there is no supplanting of funds, meaning a child may not be supported by two funding sources during the same portion of the day. At any point in time that Shared Visions funds are supporting the program, you must maintain the required 1:8 ratio as dictated by Iowa Code 256A.3(5)(a)(4). An awarded applicant is required to maintain accurate accounting records of revenues and expenditures, as well as ensure that the use of funds is appropriate for each funding source.

Enrollment/Student Eligibility

1. What are the requirements for enrollment of children? How is “at-risk” defined?

A: Grantees are required to enroll children based on primary and secondary eligibility guidelines. It is required that grantees document the number of children enrolled under primary and secondary eligibility and the criteria used for enrollment.

Primary Eligibility: No fewer than 80% of age-eligible children who are from families at or below 130% of the federal poverty guideline may be enrolled per [IAC 281-64.7](#). Tuition or fees may not be charged to children and families enrolled based on primary eligibility.

Secondary Eligibility: No more than 20% of age-eligible children may be enrolled based on other at-risk factors as defined in [IAC 281-64.8](#). Children enrolled based on secondary eligibility and above the income eligibility guidelines may be served on a sliding fee schedule determined at the local level.

2. Can children who don’t meet the enrollment requirements attend the Shared Visions classroom?

A: The program may include children not at risk, provided they are at full pay and meet age requirements. These children must be considered when determining the requirements for class size maximum and child-teacher ratio.

Reporting

1. What kind of reporting is required if awarded?

A: Annual year-end reports and renewal applications, as well as information necessary to allow the Department to create unique student ID numbers will be required. It is also required that three checkpoints be completed with all enrolled children in *Teaching Strategies GOLD* online. In addition, programs must follow the reporting requirements necessary to maintain NAEYC Accreditation.

Length of Program

1. Is there a requirement for the number of hours per week or number of days per year that a Shared Visions Preschool Program must offer? Where would we find this guidance? Is there a definition of full day?

A: The law does not define the length of day or program year. The program should be designed to meet the comprehensive needs of the community and service area requesting funding. A

successful applicant will assess the needs of the community and design a program to adequately meet those needs.

In-kind Requirement

1. What qualifies for the in-kind support 20% match? Specifically does it include other state/private pay or other expenses not covered by the grant?

A: Other state/federal funding may be used to meet the 20% match of in-kind. Please note that supplanting of funds is not allowable. (See the Funding/Budgets section for more information.) In-kind funding may include donated services, time, and goods. For example, community members or local organizations may contribute services such as vision screenings, classroom materials and/or volunteer in the classroom. A program may also receive free or discounted use of buildings/space, telephone or utilities, which may be considered in-kind support. A program cannot charge for tuition or fees when a student qualifies for the program based on income eligibility (at least 80% of those enrolled). Therefore, in this instance, private pay is not an option for in-kind support. Students who qualify based on secondary risk factors (no more than 20% of those enrolled) and who are over income may be charged tuition or fees on a sliding scale determined at the local level. Children who are integrated into the program but do not qualify based on Shared Visions eligibility requirements, must be at full pay. In these instances, private pay may be considered as in-kind support. It would also be appropriate to consider expenses not covered by the grant that are funded through other sources and which are necessary for the operation of the program as in-kind support.