

Closing the Gap RFP

Given the countless factors that contribute to a family's ability to access early learning opportunities that meet their needs, a comprehensive understanding of the state of access in Indiana has historically been elusive. Community leaders and early care providers are often left wondering how to approach capacity expansion to address crucial local needs and create sustainable growth.

Through the Closing the Gap report, Early Learning Indiana seeks to describe the intersections between the components contributing to adequate early care and education access and provide Hoosier communities with a guide for prioritizing their efforts to improve these factors. To jump start these solutions, Early Learning Indiana, with generous support from Lilly Endowment Inc., is supporting grants for organizations to close the gap in their communities.

Eligibility:

Applicants must be a tax-exempt nonprofit organization incorporated in the state of Indiana.

Grant Details:

Closing the Gap grants are intended to support communities in addressing their specific local gaps in access to high-quality early learning programs. Solutions should consider access, quality, affordability and choice.

Eligible organizations may submit a proposal to increase access. Proposals may request \$1,500 per new preschool or pre-K seat created and \$3,000 per new infant or toddler seat created. Grant funds may be used to cover construction and/or capital improvements related to new or current site expansion, classroom materials, marketing and enrollment supports, staffing for seat acquisition processes, student assessment materials and/or training, operational software and/or training, and administrative support. For full eligibility criteria, details on approved uses of funding and additional information, visit EarlyLearningIN.org/closing-the-gap/grants. Applicants who need assistance with their submission should email natalieb@earlylearningindiana.org.

All proposals must be submitted via the online platform located [here](#).

Application sections and required information are as follows.

Organization Information

- Primary contact name, title, phone (email)
- Organization name
- Mission
- Brief organizational description
- Website
- Proof of nonprofit status (upload)
- Organization type (early childhood provider, community foundation, community organization, school district or higher education institute)

Collaborative Team

Proposals should be locally inspired and represent the thinking of diverse community stakeholders, including representation across multiple sectors such as education, health, government and business.

- Upload your collaborative team list. For each individual, list their name, title, organization and role in your project. Be specific when describing roles in your project. All early learning providers included in your project must have representation on your collaborative team. For early learning providers, list their license or registration number and current Paths to QUALITY™ level.
- Upload signed MOUs for necessary aspects of your proposal. At minimum these must include:
 - in-kind or monetary match(es)
 - key operational partnerships

Proposal for Action

Closing the Gap grants are intended to support communities in addressing their specific local gaps in access to high-quality early learning programs. Solutions should consider access, quality, affordability and choice.

The Closing the Gap report describes the intersections between the various factors contributing to adequate access to early care and education and provides Hoosier communities with a guide for prioritizing their efforts to improve these factors. Learn more about your community's Early Learning Access Index at EarlyLearningIN.org/closing-the-gap.

In addition to creating new seats, all early care and education providers who are part of a Closing the Gap grant must maintain or achieve a Paths to QUALITY™ Level 3 or 4 rating during the established grant timeline. Providers must also currently use or begin using a formative assessment with all students in their program within three months of opening new seats; data from student outcomes must be shared with Early Learning Indiana through the end of 2024. Expenses related to these requirements may be included within your project plan and budget.

Project Plan:

- Detail your project plan. (1000 words)
- Upload documentation for your project plan. (optional)

Project Outcomes:

- Indicate the total number of proposed new seats for ages 0-2 and ages 3-5 within current, new and/or acquired program sites.

Timeline:

Project timelines should be focused and achievable.

- Describe your detailed project timeline. Include key milestones such as construction, hiring,

training, marketing, anticipated opening, month/year of PTO advancements, month/year to begin implementing formative assessment, etc. (500 words)

- Upload documentation for your project timeline. (optional)

Budget:

Grant funds may be used to cover construction and/or capital improvements related to new or current site expansion, classroom materials, marketing and enrollment supports, staffing for seat acquisition processes, student assessment materials and/or training, operational software and/or training, and administrative support.

- Indicate the total amount requested. Proposals may request \$1,500 per new preschool or pre-K seat created and \$3,000 per new infant or toddler seat created.
- Indicate the amount and describe components for the categories of personnel, facilities, materials and other. 'Other' may include contracted and administrative support.
- Upload documentation for your budget. (optional)

Impact

Closing the Gap grants are intended to support communities in addressing their specific local gaps in access to high-quality early learning programs.

- Explain how your proposal addresses specific local gaps in access, considering capacity, quality, affordability and choice. (300 words)
- Explain how your proposal will address affordability of newly created seats. (200 words)
- Describe how you will ensure the sustainability of proposed new seats. Include any ongoing support from key stakeholders. (200 words)