

Developing Your Statement of Need for the Early Childhood Block Grant RFP

*A Resource Guide from
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The 2004 Early Childhood Block Grant RFP for Prekindergarten, Parental Training and Prevention Initiative funds requires applicants to document the need for the proposed early childhood initiative in their community. According to the RFP, “the need must be based on current statistical, demographic, or descriptive information regarding the community in which the families and children reside.” This guide outlines some sources of community-level data that may be helpful to applicants in completing this section of the RFP.

Note: Community-based organizations are strongly encouraged to contact the local school district(s) that serve the geographic area they propose to serve. In many cases, the school district may have the necessary demographic and community information already compiled and ready for inclusion in this type of proposal.

School Report Cards

www.isbe.net (click on “2003 School Report Cards are now available online”)
or <http://206.230.157.60/publicsite/getSearchCriteria.aspx>

The on-line school report cards for individual schools and school districts are useful sources of information about demographics, rates of school drop-out, truancy, mobility, and other potential risk factors. In addition Illinois Standards Achievement Test test scores for schools and districts may demonstrate that children in the community are at-risk for school failure.

The other useful characteristic of the school report cards is that they can provide information broken down to the elementary school catchment-area level. Programs that will serve children who live in just a few schools’ catchment areas can then pool together statistics from these schools’ report cards to create a very specific profile of the community they propose to serve.

From the School Report Card home page, search for the school or district you want (or if you don’t know the school or district names, enter the name of your town or city). Click on the name of the specific school or district you want in the list that comes up.

Information available on the school and/or district report card includes:

- Students’ ethnicity
- % of low-income students (see definition on report card)
- % of students with limited English proficiency
- High school drop-out rate
- Chronic truancy rate
- Mobility rate (# of times students enroll in or leave school during the school year)
- Attendance rate

US Census Bureau's America's Fact Finder www.factfinder.census.gov

The Census Bureau's web site is a rich source of easy-to-access statistics on a wide range of demographics and community information. The America's Fact Finder server provides detailed community fact sheets that can be customized to provide information on a county, township, city, or even zip code.

From the Fact Finder home page, click on "Fact Sheet" and enter the geographic area you need information for. (Note: You may have to break down your proposed service area into smaller units, such as townships or zip code areas, to find statistics for all of the areas you plan to serve.) The fact sheet will provide information on:

- Education level of adults in the community
- % of families that speak a language other than English at home
- % of residents over age 16 in the workforce

You can also pull up a map of your community that details where in the community poverty rates are highest, education levels are lowest, or non-English speaking homes are most common.

More detailed information is available by returning to the Fact Finder home page and clicking on "People." First enter the geographic area you need information for, as you did for the fact sheet. A list of available tables for that geographic area will appear. Use the following tables to obtain the following information:

<i>To find:</i>	<i>Click on:</i>
Number of children by age (e.g., 3-yr-olds)	Single years of Age Under 30 Years and Sex
Details about education levels of adults in community (e.g., # with less than 9 th grade education)	Educational Attainment
Estimate of school drop-out rate	Percent of persons 16 to 19 years not enrolled in school and not a high school graduate
Details about families who speak a language other than English at home	Ability to Speak English
Poverty rate for families with children under age 5	Poverty status-Families
Single-mother families with children under 5	Poverty status-Families

Illinois Geographic Information System: Birth to Five Program and Community Information <http://64.115.13.244/Chicago/>

This new web site is a useful source for information about teen pregnancy, child abuse & neglect, and birthweight statistics broken down by the county level (or by municipality in Cook County and community level in Chicago). It also provides information about existing birth-to

three programs throughout the state, including Early Head Start, Healthy Families Illinois, Parents Too Soon, Prevention Initiative, Parental Training, and Safe From the Start programs. Information about existing programs for children ages three to five will be added in the near future.

From the Illinois GIS home page, select “County Data,” “Municipality Data” (for municipalities in Cook County) or “Community Data” (for community areas in Chicago) in the upper right-hand corner of the page. This will bring up a table of statistics by area, including:

- % of families with children under age 5 who are in poverty
- Number and rate of indicated cases of child abuse and neglect
- % of births to teens
- % of births that were low birthweight

Information about existing birth to three programs can be accessed from the home page by first selecting the program type from the “Info Level” drop-down menu, then clicking on the I symbol above the map, and finally clicking on the symbol for the program that you see on the map. A pop-up box will give you contact information for the program, and you can call them to get specifics about who they serve and how they might overlap with your proposed service area.

IPLAN Website <http://app.idph.state.il.us>

This Illinois Department of Public Health website provides community-level data on several health-related issues. The most recent available data varies by indicator, but is usually from no more than one or two years ago.

From the IPLAN home page, click on “IPLAN Data System” and then on “Community-Level Report.” Click on the county and then the community for which you want information. Then select each indicator you want to see one at a time (this will ensure that you get the most up-to-date information possible).

Relevant indicators available on the I-Plan site include:

- % of births to teen parents
- % of low birth weight births
- Infant mortality rate

Illinois Department of Economic Security Website
<http://lmi.ides.state.il.us/laus/lausmenu.htm>

Up-to-date information on unemployment statistics for counties and cities are available on this website. Click on cities (or if your city is unavailable, click on counties) under “Current Monthly Data.” Then find your city or county in the table that appears.