

## Illinois Preschool Expansion Program Legislative Fact Sheet

In December 2014, Illinois was one of 18 states awarded a Preschool Development Grant by the U.S. Departments of Health and Human Services and Education. This grant allows the state to build on its existing long history of innovation, national leadership, and investments in supporting comprehensive early learning and development programs beginning from birth.

With an \$80 million investment from the federal government, Illinois will target the most at-risk children and families, particularly children from homeless families, children with special needs, children from families below 50% of the federal poverty limits and children in the child welfare system. These four year olds will benefit from a new comprehensive full-day preschool program model, including a full school day of instruction, education and support for parents and health, dental and mental health supports.



“During the kindergarten open house this spring, when many of our incoming kindergarteners who were not in the preschool were shy and fearful, one of our little guys in our four year old preschool classroom took his parents by the hand and practically dragged them into the building saying ‘Look, I want to show you my school!’”

– Cherie Esposito, Principal, West Aurora District 129

### Impact

- Provides five hours or more of high-quality early education to over 3,200 of Illinois’ most at-risk four-year olds.
- Brings \$20 million per year in new federal investment to 21 high-need Illinois communities for four years.
- Creates over 375 new living wage teaching and administrative jobs for Illinois residents.
- Empowers families with comprehensive parent education and family support, including connections to mental health, health, housing and other critical resources.

#### Participating Communities:

- |                                       |                            |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| • Lansing                             | • Romeoville & Bolingbrook |
| • Decatur                             | • Rockford                 |
| • Carpentersville                     | • Addison                  |
| • Aurora                              | • McLean County            |
| • Joliet                              | • Mt. Vernon               |
| • West Chicago                        | • Harvey                   |
| • Greater East St. Louis / Metro East | • Robbins                  |
| • Cicero                              | • Elgin                    |
| • Moline                              | • Riverdale                |
| • Chicago                             | • Wheaton                  |
|                                       | • North Chicago            |
|                                       | • Calumet City & Burnham   |

For more information about Illinois’ Preschool Development Grant—Expansion Program, contact the Governor’s Office of Early Childhood Development:

**Theresa Hawley, Executive Director**

Theresa.Hawley@illinois.gov