**Section 235.50 Proposal Review and Approval for New or Expanding Programs**

a) Proposals submitted for funding to establish a new program or expand an existing program shall be evaluated in accordance with the following criteria.

1) Population to be Served (30 points)

A) The proposal clearly indicates that the area to be served has a high number of children and families determined to be the most in need of the services provided by the Early Childhood Block Grant program, as indicated by high levels of poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, limited-English proficiency or other need-related indicators, such as the school district's rate of dropouts, retention, truancy, teenage pregnancies and homeless students, high rates of infant mortality, birth trauma, low birth weight or prematurity, and high rates of child abuse and neglect, and that there exists in the area to be served an insufficient number of other programs and services to fully serve all children and families who potentially could be at risk.

B) Criteria and indicators for identifying children and families who are eligible for the program are clearly established and likely to target those children and families most in need of services.

C) Effective recruitment strategies are proposed that are likely to ensure that the maximum number of eligible children and families are enrolled in the program.

2) Quality of Proposed Program (40 points)

A) The proposed program and activities will sufficiently meet the identified needs of the population to be served and include child and parent activities designed to enhance child development and parent effectiveness and, ultimately, school readiness.

B) The program proposal provides for effective linkages among parents, education, health and social service agencies, and child care providers and includes a plan for coordination of services with other educational programs serving young children and their families.

C) The proposed program is built upon effective research about early childhood education and aligned to the applicable Illinois early learning standards (see Appendix A or C).

D) The evaluation strategies include measurable outcomes for children and families that are designed to effectively gauge the success of the program and yield sufficient data that can be used to improve the program.

3) Experience and Qualifications (20 points)

A) Proposed staff hold the appropriate educator and/or professional licenses for their positions and have the qualifications and experience necessary to successfully implement a high-quality early childhood program.

B) The staff development plan adequately addresses the needs of the project staff, offers a varied and full range of staff development experiences and provides sufficient opportunities for learning so as to allow staff to incorporate the training into program delivery activities.

C) In addition, an eligible applicant other than a school district has presented evidence that it:

i) holds the appropriate licensure to operate as a day care facility;

ii) holds early childhood accreditations or has other relevant experience that demonstrates success in implementing and administering programs similar to the ones funded under the Early Childhood Block Grant Program; and

iii) has a successful track record with similar grants or contracts.

4) The program is cost-effective as evidenced by the cost of proposed services in relation to the numbers to be served and the services to be provided. (10 points)

b) The selection of proposals for funding may be based in part on geographic distribution and/or the need to provide resources to school districts and communities with varying demographic characteristics.

c) Priority consideration may be given to proposals with specific areas of emphasis, as identified by the State Superintendent of Education in a particular RFP.

d) For a previously funded applicant, progress toward correcting any deficiencies contained in an unfavorable monitoring report issued under Section 235.67 shall be considered in the review process.

e) The State Superintendent of Education shall determine the amount of individual grant awards. The final award amounts shall be based upon:

1) the total amount of funds available for the Early Childhood Block Grant; and

2) the resources requested in the top-ranked proposals, as identified pursuant to subsections (a) through (d).

(Source: Amended at 39 Ill. Reg. 6674, effective April 27, 2015)