
Guidance on Administering B-3 Seats 2022-2023

For the 2022-2023 academic year, Louisiana awarded 3,201 B-3 seats across Ready Start Networks. This guidance document provides information on and requirements for administering B-3 Seats for the third year of the pilot.

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Planning Document

Each Ready Start Network receiving B-3 Seats will complete a B-3 Seats Planning Document that includes:

- Centers with whom the Ready Start Network will partner and rationale for partnership
- Approximated allocation of seats and age group by site
- Budget draft
- Partnership agreement draft
- Other responses to planning questions, such as cost of care per age group, requirements for partnership agreement and rationale, internal business office planning, and how your office will manage eligibility determination

Each Ready Start Network will submit their planning document to the Department **by May 6 at 5 p.m.** The Department will review and provide feedback to each Ready Start Network.

Eligible Centers

The B-3 Seats Pilot aims to ensure high quality care for children who did not previously attend child care *or* to continue care for children who participated in this pilot in a previous year. Ready Start Networks must determine which centers in their network will be partners in this pilot and receive allocated seats.

In order to participate in the pilot, centers must:

- Have a 2021-2022 Performance Rating of Proficient or above
 - If a network is interested in partnering with a new Type III site that is not yet rated, justification must be clear in the planning document, with additional measures to ensure quality in partnership agreement(s)
- Have infant spots available or plan to have infant spots available beginning in fall 2022 (may use B-3 funds to create infant spots)
- Ensure seats are full time (30 hours per week, six hours of continuous care minimum per day)
- Meet the ECAC requirement for teachers
 - Teachers in classrooms where B-3 seats are placed should have their ECAC or be enrolled in an ECAC program by fall 2022

Participating Ready Start Networks may also choose to expand these site-level eligibility criteria to include other metrics or indicators of quality, equity, network participation, or workforce support. For example, Ready Start Networks may consider weighing the following criteria in their decisions:

- Participation in local collaborative meetings
- A local competitive application process
- Participation in other grants or early childhood initiatives
- The extent to which the partnership expands access or creates new child care supply in the community the center is located
- Existing waitlists or evidence of high demand
- Teacher pay and benefits requirements

Participating Ready Start Networks will set up partnership agreements, sometimes called MOUs or assurances, with their participating centers. These agreements outline the requirements the Ready Start Network establishes for the center to maintain participation in the pilot. Centers must agree to and sign these partnership agreements to participate in the pilot, and Ready Start Networks should maintain these agreements for auditing purposes. In addition to the guidance

provided by the LDOE on these partnership agreements, Ready Start Networks should consider reviewing these agreements with their organizations' legal council.

Eligibility Determination: Families and Children

Ready Start Networks that are awarded B-3 Seat funding will be required to determine eligibility for families in order to place children in these seats. Eligibility for a child lasts one calendar year (12 months) from the time of enrollment. Families will need to be processed for eligibility again in subsequent years, also known as redetermination. All families who received a seat in a previous pilot year will need to go through the redetermination process to ensure continued eligibility for the pilot.

Mid-year, the LDOE Monitoring team will conduct an audit of all eligibility documentation to ensure compliance with guidance. Documentation should be kept and be prepared to share with the LDOE as requested.

All Ready Start Networks must collect eligibility documentation from families filling B-3 Seats including:

- Child documentation (e.g., birth certificate, social security card)
- Income eligibility (pay statements, unearned income documents, calculations of overall income)
- Work, School/Training, or Actively Seeking Work Requirements
- If categorically eligible, necessary documentation for verifying foster care

Household Composition: The members of the household include: the head of household, legal or non-legal spouse, dependent children below the age of 18, and, if applicable, a minor unmarried parent.

Income eligibility: Families at or below 85% State Median Income (SMI) are eligible for these seats. Income is calculated by combining all earned income (employment) and unearned income (ex: unemployment statements, alimony, child support) for a total monthly amount.

Unearned Income: Families may receive a combination of financial benefits that contribute to their monthly income. Typical examples of these include, but are not limited to, unemployment, disability benefits, child support, alimony, social security income, and retirement benefits. These are self-reported by the family. Ready Start Networks reviewing eligibility should ask for any and all unearned income from the family with documentation to verify their benefits. Ready Start Networks should then add any unearned income to the total monthly income. Some families may not have any unearned income.

To qualify, the combined income (including earned and unearned) must be at or below the income amounts listed below:

85% State Median Income	
Family Size	Gross Monthly Income
2	\$3,939
3	\$4,866
4	\$5,793
5	\$6,720

6	\$7,646
7	\$7,820
8	\$7,994
9	\$8,168
10	\$8,341
11	\$8,515

Work, School/Training, or Actively Seeking Work Requirements: To be eligible for these seats, members* in the household must work and/or attend a school/training program for a minimum of 20 hours per week (this can be a combination of work hours + training/education hours) OR is actively seeking work**.

- **Work:** To verify this, the adults of the household should provide at least two sequential pay statements dated within two months of the application date that show the rate of pay, the hours worked, and the dates of the pay period.
- **School/Training:** If in school or a training program, the adults of the household who are students or in training in the household should provide a transcript with hours of participation in training or education program(s) dated within two months (60 days) of the application. A detailed school schedule (if applicable) from an accredited college or training program deeming full-time status, or a letter from a school advisor signed on the institution's letterhead could also verify student status. The typical minimum full-time status is 12 credit hours.
- **Actively Seeking Employment:** If adult(s) in the household are unemployed, they may still qualify by demonstrating they are actively seeking work. To qualify as “actively seeking work,” families must provide validated documentation that demonstrates they are actively seeking employment. Every unemployed adult in the household must submit validation of their Active HIRE Account information from the Louisiana Workforce Commission. *A person applying as Actively Seeking Employment cannot also already be employed.*
 - “Actively Seeking Employment” eligibility requirement aligns with CCAP, with one exception for the 2022-2023 pilot year. CCAP recipients qualifying as Actively Seeking Employment must be redetermined after 90 days from the date of their application and meet employment or training/schooling eligibility criteria. However, **2021-2022 B-3 recipients do not need to be redetermined until one year (12 months) after the enrollment date.**
 - **If previous applicants were determined eligible through Actively Seeking Employment in a previous year of the pilot, they must be verified as employed or in training to be eligible for a subsequent year.**

*Head of household, legal or non-legal spouse, or minor unmarried parent between the ages of 16 and 18 years of age must meet the eligibility requirements of employment, school/training, or actively seeking work. This establishes a need for care. This definition aligns with [Bulletin 139](#), Section §103. Definitions of *Household* and *Training or Employment Mandatory Participant (TEMPs)*, and Section §507. *Certification Requirements for Categorically Eligible Households.*

*This means that each adult in the household must meet these requirements individually. For example, Mother must be working 20 hours per week, **and** Father must be working 20 hours per week, or Mother must be a full time student **and** Father must be actively seeking employment.*

**Unless disabled as established by receipt of Social Security Administration disability benefits, supplemental security income, Veterans' Administration disability benefits for a disability of at least 70 percent, or unless disabled and unable to care for his or her child(ren), as verified by a doctor's statement or by worker determination, the head of household must meet the training or employment activity requirements listed above, in alignment with [Bulletin 139](#) §507.

Certification Requirements for Categorically Eligible Households.

Children in Foster Care: Children in foster care are categorically eligible for B-3 Seats. Children in foster care should be verified by their DCFS caseworker. ***These children should be enrolled immediately or, if seats are unavailable, moved to the top of the B-3 Seats waitlist.***

Families Experiencing Homelessness: Families experiencing homelessness are **not** categorically eligible for B-3 seats. However, they may benefit from an extended application process, the LDOE recommends 90 days of enrollment with the guarantee from the family that by the end of the 90 day period, they will have submitted all necessary application documentation to verify eligibility. Families experiencing homelessness must meet all other eligibility requirements, such as being employed for 20 hours or more per week, actively seeking employment, and below 85% SMI. Families experiencing homelessness should be verified through the local McKinney-Vento Liaison to verify the 90 day extended application period.

Minor Unmarried Parents: If a parent is a minor unmarried parent, or "MUP", the parent of the MUP is the head of household. A MUP aged 16-18 years old must additionally meet the school or training requirements, but still is not the head of household. The MUP must have their legal guardian apply on behalf of the child needing care. The only exception to the MUP not being the head of household is if they are legally emancipated, and in that case would need to provide documentation from family court to verify the emancipation.

FOR MINOR UNMARRIED PARENTS ONLY

Minor unmarried parents are in particularly difficult circumstances. Because of this, *for B-3 seats only*, families with a minor unmarried parent (MUP) can qualify for B-3 seats with *95% of the State Median Income*, see the table below:

2 Person	3 Person	4 Person	5 Person	6 Person	7 Person
\$4,402	\$5,438	\$6,474	\$7,510	\$8,546	\$8,740

8 Person	9 Person	10 Person	11 Person	12 Person
\$8,934	\$9,129	\$9,323	\$9,517	\$9,711

The above table is the income eligibility for families with a minor unmarried parent only.

Aged birth to three years old: The birth date cut off for each year is September 30. Children's ages are determined by the following brackets:

BIRTH DATE RANGE (2022-2023 Year)		AGE GROUP
10/1/2021	Present	Infant
10/1/2020	9/30/2021	1-Year-Old
10/1/2019	9/30/2020	2-Year-Old
10/1/2018	9/30/2019	3-Year-Old
Older		Ineligible

Documents to Verify Eligibility		
Required for all applications (except categorically eligible families)	Child and Family Documentation	<p>Immunization records or Immunization Exemption (child only)</p> <p>Identification and proof of residency (e.g., state-issued ID, such as Driver's License or social security card) for head of household applying on behalf of child)</p> <p>Birth certificates or hospital records (child only)</p> <p>Custodial documentation (only if not biological parent of child) such as Custody Judgments, Child Placement Agreement from DCFS, Provisional Custody by Mandate, Military Power of Attorney, Non-Legal Custodian Affidavit</p>
Head of household, legal or non-legal spouse of head of household, and (if applicable) minor unmarried parent aged 16-18, needs to submit documentation that falls into one of these three categories	Work Eligibility	<p>Minimum of two sequential pay statements dated within two months of the application date that show the rate of pay, hours worked, and the dates of the pay period</p> <p>OR</p> <p>If newly employed, a professional letter from the employer with the work hours, the weekly schedule, the rate of pay, and the start date of employment. Contact information of the employer must be included, and then verified by Ready Start Network</p> <p>OR</p> <p>If self employed, the adult can submit the statement of irregular employment form and state hours worked per week, earned income, and start date of work. The person completing the form must provide an IRS 1099 form or statement from employer/financial supporter to verify information</p>
	School/Training Eligibility	<p>Official school or training transcript with full time or part-time status indicated (enrolled within two months of the application)</p> <p>OR</p> <p>A detailed school schedule (if applicable) from an accredited college or training program deeming full-time status</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Letter from a school advisor signed on the institution's letterhead verifying</p>

		student status
	Actively Seeking Employment Eligibility	HIRE Account Registration screen shot with client name and date of registration OR Unemployment statements with client's name and date of payments for all adults in the household who are not employed or in training
Required for all applications	Income eligibility	If employed, documentation for work eligibility contributes to income eligibility AND All unearned income documentation must be counted when calculating income eligibility

Income Calculation

How to Translate Income into a Monthly Figure	
Pay Period	Formula
Hourly	(Hourly Wage x hours per week) x 4.33
Monthly (same gross pay each month)	Use gross salary
Paid same gross amount exactly 2 times per month (e.g. 1st and 15th of month)	Gross salary x 2
Paid same gross amount every 2 weeks (e.g. every other Friday)	(Gross salary ÷ 2) x 4.33

Income for families should be calculated using an average of their monthly earned income and unearned income, as applicable to each family situation. A family's income is the total average monthly income based upon the documents provided by the family.

Redetermining Eligibility for Returning Families

All families who received a seat in year one and two will need to go through the redetermination process. To complete this process, the Ready Start Network should:

- Notify families of eligibility documents needed - *note, if a family was previously deemed eligible through Actively Seeking Employment, in the subsequent year they must provide employment or training verification to remain eligible*
- Notify families of deadline to return documents for redetermination (no later than one year after initial application)
- Verify eligibility once documents are received
- Confirm placement or retention of seat
- For 3-year-olds served in 2020-2021 and 2021-2022, support families in transitioning to LA 4 or another pre-K program.

All families, including those who participated in the previous years of the pilot, must meet the described eligibility criteria. Eligibility for a child lasts one calendar year from the time of the application.

Suggested Family Application Timeline			
Initial Meeting*	Family Submits Application	Ready Start Network verifies Eligibility	Child(ren) Enrolls
<i>Before enrollment, discuss eligibility documentation needed for receiving a seat, provide deadlines to families and guidance for returning eligible documents.</i>	<i>All dates on eligibility documentation should be dated within two months of application date.</i>	<i>Suggested turn-around in determination is no more than 10 days after application. If children are in foster care, they should be enrolled immediately.</i>	<i>Family is notified of any outstanding documentation and given a timeline on when to return with documents to enroll in child care.</i>

*Estimate the turnaround time for your office to process eligibility and accept or reject an application. Plan to start recruitment of *new to B-3* families accordingly so that children can be enrolled as early as August 2. If a Ready Start Network is interested in enrolling children prior to August 1, they should ensure their eGMS budget is submitted and approved by LDOE and communicate enrollment dates with devon.camarota@la.gov.

Rates for Seats

Age Group	B-3 Rate Allocated by LDOE
3 Year Olds	\$10,670
Toddlers (1 or 2 year olds)	\$11,700
Infants	\$18,940

These rates are based on what CCAP is currently paying as of February 1, 2022. This rate also includes an estimated CCAP Quarterly Bonus Payment, based on the estimated amount given to four star centers. These rates have been calculated in such a way that Ready Start Networks should ensure that 1) B-3 seats are financially desirable for centers to maintain 2) support teachers in earning competitive salaries and 3) are entirely tuition free to families.

Ready Start Networks, for the 2022-2023 year, will be required to spend **at least 70% of their award on direct payments for seats**. Each Ready Start Network can set its own rates per their agreements with participating centers, but at a minimum spend 70% of the award on direct payments. This should mean an increase in the rates that previous networks in the B-3 Pilot have paid centers per child. Centers also must have individual rates for infants, toddlers, and three year olds. Ready Start Networks must indicate the rate that will be paid per child in their planning document, **due May 6**.

Sample Network Award				
Sample Allocation	Calculation	Minimum amount network would pay centers per seat <i>(70% of LDOE allocation per seat)</i>	Minimum amount network would pay centers total	Discretionary funds that network could use for quality supports, staffing, etc.
\$94,700	5 infant seats @ \$18,940 per seat	\$13,258 per seat	\$66,290	\$28,410

Enrollment and Attendance Tracking

An additional requirement of this pilot is for Ready Start Networks and centers to track daily attendance and submit to the Department monthly. Signed attendance trackers will be due on the 10th day of the following month (in alignment with LA 4 attendance tracking), and must account for each day of the child’s enrollment.

Tracking will only capture “present” or “absent” and not take into account excused absences. Ready Start Networks should maintain consistent communication with their centers and establish an internal protocol on how and when centers should submit attendance to the Ready Start Network, so they may enter the attendance into the Department Reviewed tracker. The tracker will be shared as a Google Sheet by July 2022. In the case of a child not regularly attending, Ready Start Networks and center directors should make ample attempts to contact the family to ensure the child’s presence in care. If a child is enrolled but has not attended for 30 days, the Ready Start Network should notify the family of loss of the publicly funded seat, and the Ready Start Network should enroll a new child in the seat.

Ready Start Networks are required to implement an attendance requirement for families, however that requirement is to be determined by the Ready Start network. This requirement should be noted in the Ready Start Network’s Planning Document.

Additional Recommendations

One of the greatest benefits of B-3 Seats being a pilot program is the learning and innovation each participant brings to the greater cohort. Throughout the first years of the pilot, the Department studied practices and procedures used across the participating networks to see areas where individual Ready Start Networks found success. The following recommendations come from those conversations, surveys, and data reflections.

- 1. Pay Schedules:** The Department recommends paying centers at the beginning of the month based on enrollment. At the beginning of the pilot year, the Department also recommends paying participating centers a percentage of their allocation for “start up” funds, to buffer any gaps in pay or in enrollment.
- 2. Partnership Agreements - Flexibility:** The Department recommends establishing partnership agreements that provide centers with an approximate, rather than “set in stone,” seat allocation number and age. Family needs are unpredictable: they may have multiple siblings in need of care, or prefer a center closer to home rather than work. Flexibility early on allows Ready Start Networks to make adjustments to meet the needs of the community.
- 3. Partnership Agreements - Removal of Seats:** The Department recommends including a clause in each partnership agreement describing cause for removal of seats. In the rare occasion that seats need to be

permanently relocated to another center, it is important to have clear language to establish that protocol if needed.

- a. example: *The Ready Start Network has the right to remove children and funding from _____ (center) at any point during the year if the Ready Start Network finds that _____ (center) is out of compliance with any of the listed agreement requirements, or in violation of any requirements listed within [Bulletin 137](#).*

4. **Budgeting for Staff Capacity:** The Department recommends allocating funds for either a new hire, or expanding existing staff to include administrative duties for B-3 seats management. Having a team member on staff specifically for B-3 Seats will help build internal systems that will work toward expanding quality and access. Additionally, networks might consider budgeting for a staff member to carry multiple roles, such as B-3 Seats eligibility determination and coaching for B-3 Seats teachers.
5. **Establish a Waitlist Specific to B-3 Seats:** Most Ready Start Networks requested more seats than the LDOE was able to award; however, additional allocations may be awarded throughout the year depending on other enrollment in other networks, and the existence of a waitlist in a network with 100% enrollment. Ready Start Networks are encouraged to notify the LDOE when they have reached 100% enrollment, and the number of children on the waitlist, so that if additional allocations are possible, they can be administered as quickly as possible.

Calendar of Events

Date	Activity
March 23 2-4 p.m.	Kickoff Webinar
April 6 2-4 p.m.	Eligibility Webinar
May 6	Planning Document Due; emailed to devon.camarota@la.gov
May 25 2-3 p.m.	eGMS Budget Prep Webinar
June 1	Funds live in eGMS, complete assurances, contact information, and submit budget
July 15	eGMS, Payments, and Eligibility Webinar
July 31	Budget due in eGMS for review