Established in 1987, the Oregon Head Start Prekindergarten (OHSP) program provides comprehensive child and family development services for 3- and 4-year-old children from low-income families. In 1992, a state-federal partnership was formalized between the Region X Office of Head Start and the Oregon Department of Education to support a collaborative Head Start and state prekindergarten system which later expanded to serve additional Head Start-eligible children.

OHSP programs operate using federal and/or state funds with federal funds enabling an additional 6,066 children to receive preschool services. To provide state funding for the program, general fund dollars are allocated on a biennial basis by the state legislature. All state agencies had a 9 percent funding reduction in the preceding biennium, but for the 2011-2012 school year, state funding for the program was increased by $11 million and remained level the following year. In 2013-2014, funding was generally unchanged.

OHSP program funding is available to a number of organizations. To increase enrollment, all federal Head Start grantees initially were awarded state prekindergarten funds through a competitive state-wide grant process; in 2013-2014, funds were awarded on a continuation basis. Non-sectarian private and public organizations not receiving federal Head Start funding, including: public schools, private agencies, community action agencies, government agencies and colleges and universities have also been awarded competitive state prekindergarten funds. In 2013-2014, approximately 10 percent of OHSP children were served in public schools and 90 percent of children in other Head Start settings. Programs ensure children receive services in inclusive settings with 18 percent of enrolled students qualifying for and receiving special education services in regular classrooms. Federal Head Start Performance Standards must be followed and all programs must meet monitoring requirements.

The state Early Childhood Foundations for Children Birth to Five early learning standards had been in place since 2007. They were replaced in 2012 by the Head Start Child Development Early Learning Framework (HSCDEL F), which are currently being aligned with Common Core State Standards for K-12. The Oregon Department of Education implemented Teaching Strategies GOLD as the primary developmental assessment tool, requiring its use by all State Head Start Prekindergarten programs beginning July 2012. No formal assessment has been conducted of the Oregon Head Start Prekindergarten program to date.

Program quality is monitored by the Oregon DOE through ongoing communication with grantees and the Regional Office of Head Start. Triennial evaluations are conducted on-site for every grantee, either through the Oregon Department of Education and/or the Office of Head Start, though additional site visits are conducted as needed. Regardless of funding source, all children enrolled in the OHSP programs receive unique identifier numbers so that children's developmental progress can be followed as they enter the K-12 system.

Assistant teacher qualifications requiring a minimum of a CDA took effect in the 2013-2014 school year. As a result, Oregon met benchmark criteria for nine NIEER quality standards in 2014, up from eight the preceding year.

In 2012, Oregon was one of five states funded in the second round of federal Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge.
OREGON HEAD START PREKINDERGARTEN

ACCESS

Total state program enrollment ........................................................... 7,209
School districts that offer state program............................................. 100% (counties)
Income requirement ........................................................................... 100% FPL†
Hours of operation ................................................................................ Determined locally
Operating schedule ............................................................................... Academic year
Special education enrollment, ages 3 and 4 ............................................ 6,384
Federally funded Head Start enrollment, ages 3 and 4 ......................... 6,645
State-funded Head Start enrollment, ages 3 and 4 ................................. 0.3

QUALITY STANDARDS CHECKLIST

POLICY
Early learning standards ................................................................. Comprehensive
Teacher degree ................................................................................. AA4 .............. BA
Teacher specialized training ............................................................. AA in ECE4 .............. Specializing in pre-K
Assistant teacher degree .................................................................... CDA4 .............. CDA or equivalent
Teacher in-service ............................................................................... At least 15 hours/year
Maximum class size .......................................................................... 20 or lower
3-year-olds ....................................................................................... 17
4-year-olds ....................................................................................... 20
Staff-child ratio .................................................................................. 1:10 or better
3-year-olds ....................................................................................... 27
4-year-olds ....................................................................................... 1:10
Screening/referral ............................................................................. Vision, hearing, health, dental, other, Vision, hearing, health, and
and support services ............................................................................. developmental; and support servicesa at least 1 support service
Meals ................................................................................................ Breakfast, lunch, and snack4 At least 1/day
Monitoring ........................................................................................... Site visits and other monitoring Site visits

RESOURCES

Total state pre-K spending ................................................................. $61,069,8917
Local match required? ........................................................................ No
State spending per child enrolled ....................................................... $8,4717
All reported spending per child enrolled* ........................................ $8,471

* Pre-K programs may receive additional funds from federal or local sources that are not included in this figure.
** Head Start per-child spending for the 2013-2014 year includes funding only for 3- and 4-year-olds served. Past years figured have unintentionally included funds for Early Head Start.
*** K-12 expenditures include capital spending as well as current operating expenditures. Data are for the ‘13-’14 school year, unless otherwise noted.

1 If a grantee has both federal Head Start and state pre-K funding, 80 percent of children must meet the income requirement. If a grantee only has state pre-K funding, 80% of children must meet the income requirement. In addition, effective as of December 2007, 35 percent of enrollment may be children whose family incomes are between 100% and 130% FPL after priority is given to children at 100% or below FPL.
2 Oregon defines “part-day” services as 6 hours or less per day which does not fully align with NIEER definitions for part- (4 hours or less), school- (4-8 hours), and extended-day (more than 8 hours) services. Programs must offer at least 3.5 hours per day for a minimum of 32 weeks per year, plus required home visits at 1.5 hours each. Most programs operate 3.5 to 4 hours per day, 2.5 days per week, plus required home visits for a school year using non-funding, although many operate for a 6 hour school day. School- and extended-day programs (more than 6 hours) are supported with other funding.
3 This number represents enrollment in the Oregon Head Start Prekindergarten program. All state-funded Head Start enrollment operates through this program.
4 In public schools, lead teachers must have a BA, a teaching license, and 15 ECE credits. In nonpublic schools, half of grantee teachers must have at least an AA or higher in ECE or a related credential, with a minimum of 15 credits in ECE. Teachers in nonpublic settings who do not have an AA must have a CDA. The Head Start Reauthorization Act of 2007 required that by the 2011-2012 school year, all lead teachers must have at least an AA; by September 2013, 50 percent must have at least a BA. By 2013, all assistant teachers must have at least a CDA or be enrolled in a program to receive a CDA, AA, or BA within two years.
5 Support services include parent conferences or home visits, parent education or job training, parenting support or training, parent involvement activities, health services for parents and children, information about nutrition, referral to social services, transition to kindergarten activities, and mental health services.
6 Programs are required to offer meals and snacks that provide at least one-third of the child's daily nutritional needs. In addition to lunches for all children, morning programs offer breakfast to all children, and afternoon programs offer snacks to all children.
7 This figure represents the state contribution to the Oregon Head Start Prekindergarten program, which is a state-funded Head Start model. All state pre-K spending is therefore directed toward Head Start programs.