



Mohammed Choudhury
State Superintendent of Schools

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

CONTACT: Lora Rakowski, lora.rakowski@maryland.gov
410-767-0486

Maryland State Department of Education Announces Judy Center Early Learning Hub Expansion Grants to Support Early Childhood Education

Blueprint for Maryland's Future Provides Funding for Additional Nine Centers Next Fiscal Year; Each Center Eligible for up to \$330,000 Per Year

BALTIMORE, MD (March 30, 2022) – Today, the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) announced a new grant opportunity to expand Judy Center Early Learning Hubs that serve and support Maryland's youngest children and their families by providing comprehensive early care and education services. The historic education reform law, the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, provides Local Education Agencies (LEAs) throughout the State with the opportunity to apply for grants up to \$330,000 per year to establish new Judy Centers. The Blueprint expands Judy Centers to include nine new additional Centers each year over the next five fiscal years, and then doubles the expansion to include 18 new centers each year in the following five fiscal years.

Named for Prince George's County early education coordinator Judith P. Hoyer who rallied public and private agencies around the needs of local families, Judy Centers play an essential role in the communities they serve. By connecting early childhood programs with schools, the Centers help provide quality transitions for children and families and ensure all children, regardless of income, enter kindergarten ready to succeed. Although each location is uniquely positioned to serve its individual community, all of Maryland's Judy Centers employ a two-generational approach, which focuses on creating opportunities for and addressing the needs of children, parents and families.

"Early childhood is a time of remarkable growth and at this critical stage, it is imperative that we lay a strong foundation for learning and development. High-quality early childhood programs like the Judy Center are pivotal in preparing children for success in school and helping to improve the quality of life for vulnerable children and families," said State Superintendent of Schools Mohammed Choudhury. "Ensuring that children are ready for success in kindergarten requires a coordinated effort among parents, providers, teachers, school districts, local and state government, non-profits, business, and other community partners."

This funding opportunity is designed for LEAs to establish new Judy Centers. Priority will be given to programs that establish a Judy Center located in a Title 1 school or in a community designated as high-need as indicated by a score of 0.6 or more on the [Center for Disease Control's Social Vulnerability Index](https://atsdr.cdc.gov/placeandhealth/svi/index.html) (atsdr.cdc.gov/placeandhealth/svi/index.html). The Grant Information Guide, Judy Center Grant application, and other information about the grant program, including the schedule for customer service support sessions, can be found on the [MSDE's Division of Early Childhood website](https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/judy-center-grants) (<https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/judy-center-grants>). Program funding is contingent on final budget legislation for Fiscal Year 2023. Grant applications are now being accepted and are due by May 16, 2022.

The nine new Judy Centers established through this grant will join the 69 Judy Center Early Learning Hubs currently serving children from birth to age 5. The Blueprint for Maryland's Future will add an additional nine Judy Centers each year from FY2023 to FY2025 and eighteen additional hubs each year from FY2026 to FY2030. Learn more about the history and importance of [Judy Centers](https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/families/judy-centers) (<https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/families/judy-centers>).

###