

Nevada

Background

Pre-Kindergarten Education Program (PEP)

Nevada's PEP is a relatively small program that offers at least ten hours per week of pre-K programming for three- and four-year-olds. Each provider determines child eligibility locally, but the state prioritizes homeless students, students from low-income families, students with disabilities, and English language learners.¹

The Nevada Department of Education (NDE) administers the Pre-Kindergarten Education Program as a competitive grant program. School districts and community organizations are eligible to receive PEP funding.²

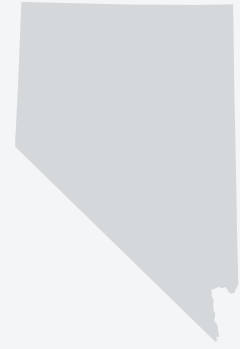
Charter schools in Nevada

Nevada only allows start-up charter schools, not conversion charter schools. Local school boards, a college within the Nevada System of Higher Education, and the State Public Charter School Authority can authorize Nevada charter schools. School boards and institutions of higher education must be approved by the Nevada Department of Education to become authorizers.³ In practice, only local education agencies (LEAs) and the State Public Charter School Authority authorize charter schools.⁴

Process for Accessing Pre-K Funds

Providers interested in offering PEP compete for two-year grants through the Nevada Department of Education. Funding during the second year is conditioned on successful completion of the grant requirements during the first year, including program requirements and early childhood education and parent outcome indicators, such as increases in children's auditory comprehension and the amount of time parents spend reading with their children. New and existing providers are eligible to apply for PEP grants every two years.

The state convenes a panel to review provider applications. The panel consists of at least three members: one early childhood professional, one education professional, and one individual with expertise in literacy and/or parenting programs. The panel assesses applications using a rubric that includes indicators such as program need and eligibility and strong evidence of collaboration with existing programs.⁵



TOTAL SCORE

31/50

Nevada's climate for charter schools to offer pre-K is **somewhat hospitable**

- + There are no state statutory or regulatory barriers to charter schools accessing state funding for pre-K.
- Compared to K-12 funding levels, low pre-K program funding makes offering pre-K less attractive to charters.
- The size of the pre-K program limits charter access to funding.
- + The funding, application, and approval processes do not create barriers to charter access.
- + Automatic enrollment from charter pre-K to kindergarten is not prohibited in legislation or practice.



Barriers

Are there any statutory or regulatory barriers to charter schools accessing state funding for pre-K?

+ **No.** Although neither the state charter law nor the PEP legislation explicitly allows charter schools to offer pre-K or compete for PEP funding, Nevada's charter law does imply that charter schools can serve pre-K students. The law allows charter schools to grant enrollment preference to any child who "was enrolled, free of charge and on the basis of a lottery system, in a prekindergarten program at the charter school or any other early-childhood educational program affiliated with the charter school." At least two charter schools in the state offer pre-K. Neither program receives funding through PEP.

Is the funding level of the state pre-K program a barrier to charter access?

- **Yes.** Low pre-K program funding, compared to K-12 funding levels, makes pre-K less attractive to charters. Charter schools that offer half-day PEP services receive less than 38 percent of the per-pupil funding amount that charters receive to serve full-day K-12 students.

Is the size of the state pre-K program a barrier to charter access?

- **Yes.** The size of the program is a barrier to charters accessing state pre-K funds. The program only serves 3 percent of all four-year-olds in the state.

Is the application, approval, and/or funding process a barrier to charter access?

+ **No.** The application, approval, and funding processes are not barriers to charter access.

Is automatic enrollment from pre-K to kindergarten prohibited in legislation or practice?

+ **No.** Nevada charter school legislation allows charter schools to grant enrollment preference to children who previously attended a pre-K program affiliated with or at the school.

Recommendations

To address these barriers to charter access, the state should:

- Increase funding for PEP to cover the cost of delivering a high-quality program.
- Increase the overall number of state-funded pre-K slots.



	Pre-Kindergarten Education Program (PEP)	Charter schools in Nevada
Year created	Launched in 2001 ⁶	Charter law enacted in 1997 ⁷
Children in state	78,489 three- and four-year-olds in Nevada ⁸	553,345 school-age children in Nevada ⁹
Children served	1,393 children served 1 percent of three-year-olds 3 percent of four-year-olds ¹⁰	26,022 students served 4.7 percent of school-age population Thirty-four charter schools ¹¹
Charters offering pre-K	At least two charter schools in Nevada offer pre-K; the state does not track data on charter schools with affiliated pre-K programs. ^{12,13}	Twenty-eight charters in Nevada offer elementary school programs. ¹⁴
Funding	Providers receive \$2,439 per pupil to offer PEP.	Charter schools receive \$6,500 to serve K–12 students. ¹⁵

Endnotes

1 W. Steven Barnett et al., “The State of Preschool 2013: State Preschool Yearbook” (New Brunswick, NJ: National Institute for Early Education Research, 2013), <http://nieer.org/sites/nieer/files/yearbook2013.pdf>.

2 “Request for Application,” Nevada Department of Education, 2015, http://www.doe.nv.gov/Early_Learning_Development/State_PreK/FY16PREKGrantApp/.

3 National Alliance for Public Charter Schools (NAPCS), “Measuring Up: Nevada,” <http://www.publiccharters.org/get-the-facts/law-database/states/NV/>.

4 “Nevada Charter Authorizers,” National Association of Charter School Authorizers, 2014, <http://www.qualitycharters.org/authorizer-comparison/state-by-state-overviews-nevada.html>

5 “Request for Application,” Nevada Department of Education, 2015, http://www.doe.nv.gov/Early_Learning_Development/State_PreK/FY16PREKGrantApp/.

6 W. Steven Barnett et al., “The State of Preschool 2013.”

7 NAPCS, “Measuring Up: Nevada.”

8 State population data calculated using ACS 2012 five-year estimates; U.S. Census Bureau, “American Community Survey,” www.census.gov/acs.

9 Ibid., all children in households, three to seventeen years old.

10 W. Steven Barnett et al., “The State of Preschool 2013.”

11 NAPCS, “Measuring Up: Nevada.”

12 “Nevada Charter School Guide,” Charter School Association of Nevada, 2013, http://www.nevadacharters.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/2013_csan_guide.pdf

13 High Desert Montessori, <http://www.hdmsreno.com/#!directory/c1rwx>; Sierra Nevada Charter School Academy, <http://www.snacs.org/pre-school/>.

14 “Charter Schools,” Nevada Department of Education, 2015, http://www.doe.nv.gov/Charter_Schools/.

15 Interview with representative of Charter School Association of Nevada, November 20, 2014.