



# RURAL CHILD CARE PLANNING GRANT GUIDELINES

Child care is a challenge across rural communities in Iowa and across the nation. However, the solutions are often more complicated than the construction of a new facility. Many factors need to be carefully analyzed to determine the feasibility for development of a child care center, expansion of an existing one or support for in-home providers. Through greater understanding of their geographic market, demographics, competition, financials, and other factors, communities can be armed with the information needed to take proactive steps towards addressing child care challenges. Funding from the program will empower communities to assess their current child care environment and develop strategies.

The program, defined in Iowa Administrative Code, is administered by the [Center for Rural Revitalization](#), a division of the Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA), in consultation with the Governor's Empower Rural Iowa Initiative Task Forces.

## TIMELINE

### **July 1, 2024 | Application Window Opens**

Application available through [iowaGrants.gov](https://iowagrants.gov)

### **July 16, 2024 | Grant Informational Webinar**

[Register for the informational webinar](#) to be held on Tuesday, July 16 at 1:00pm CT. This webinar will be recorded and posted on the grant website.

### **August 30, 2024 | Application Deadline**

Deadline to submit an application for funding is 4:00pm CT, August 30, 2024

### **September 30, 2024 | Funding Decision Notification**

Applicants notified of funding decisions by September 30, 2024.

### **October 1, 2024 - June 30, 2026 | Funding Period**

All project activities and incurred expenses must occur within the eligible contracted funding period of October 1 2024 - June 30, 2026. Funding is awarded on a reimbursement basis after expenses have been incurred for approved project activities.



## ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

### *Eligible Use of Funding*

The program provides funding for planning initiatives addressing child care needs through a professional third-party partner.

### *Eligible Applicants*

The following entities are eligible to apply:

- City and county governments or federally recognized tribal governments physically located in Iowa;
- Federally designated nonprofit agencies and foundations;
- Public and private schools that serve grades pre-K through 12 and are physically located in Iowa; and
- Higher education institutions located in Iowa.

The study must take place in and benefit a community in Iowa with a population of 20,000 or fewer and not contiguous to a city with a population of 40,000 or greater. If a county-wide application, the applicant must be within one of the 88 least-populous counties in Iowa. Any eligible applicant may submit an application that includes one or more partners and may apply on behalf of multiple cities or an entire county if the county is one of the 88 least-populous counties in Iowa.

### *Eligible Project Requirements*

Requirements for Rural Child Care Planning Grant awards include, but are not limited to the following:

- Applicants must demonstrate the capacity for grants administration.
- Applications must provide 1:1/2 cash match.
- Applications must agree to contract with a professional third-party partner for completion of the market study and strategic goals.
- Applicant communities must identify the third-party organization in their application that will conduct the planning process.

## FUNDING

### *Grant Request Amount*

Grant Recipients will be awarded \$20,000.

### *Match Requirement*

Applicants are required to demonstrate investment in the project process by providing a minimum of \$10,000 cash match. The cash match must be secured, dedicated to eligible expenses, a legitimate part of the project and be expended within the eligible funding period. Cash match constitutes actual cash contributed to direct project expenses by the applicant or other funding sources. The minimum \$10,000 match requirement may be raised through a combination of public and private sources but may not include in-kind donations of goods or services, unsecured funding or loans. Funding from state government already being used as match from another program, including other funds from IEDA, cannot be used to meet the match requirement.

### *Funding Period*

All project activities and incurred expenses must occur within the eligible contracted funding period of October 1, 2024 - June 30, 2026. Funding is awarded on a reimbursement basis after expenses have been incurred for approved project activities within the eligible funding period. Expenses incurred before or after the eligible funding period are not eligible for reimbursement.

### *Disbursement of Funds*

Disbursements will be made on a reimbursement basis. Disbursement claims must be for an amount equal to or greater than \$500 per request. All claims must be made through IowaGrants.gov. When submitting a claim, the following items are required:

- An invoice and proof of payment.
- The IEDA may request additional documentation as needed.

## REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

### *Biannual Reports*

Twice yearly (April and October), the recipient must provide an update on the percentage towards completion and a narrative of the activities taken place.

Recipients shall also provide a narrative description of any deviations from the proposed timeline, tasks and objectives during the reporting period. If the reported deviations will have an impact on the remainder of the project, the recipient must also notify the program manager via email.

### *Final Report*

- The final report will be submitted via [IowaGrants.gov](http://IowaGrants.gov) within 30 days of the project completion date.
- IEDA may withhold 5% of project funds until the final report is received and approved by the program manager.
- The final report shall contain the following information:
  - Executive Summary
  - Timeline of the completion of each goal or objective
  - Narrative description of grant activities undertaken to support the project
  - Narrative description of the achievements of the project
  - The benefit the end product provides or will provide
  - Narrative description of any deviation from the original budget, timeline or any grant activity

## ONLINE APPLICATION SUBMISSION

Applicants must apply via [IowaGrants.gov](http://IowaGrants.gov), an online application portal. Applications will not be accepted in any other format. Late, incomplete, or ineligible applications will not be considered. Applicants must create a login to view the full application for the program.

## REVIEW PROCESS

Applications will be reviewed for completion, eligibility, and adherence to published guidelines. Eligible applications will be referred for a competitive review by a volunteer panel, including the Governor's Empower Rural Iowa Initiative task force members, IEDA staff, and expert professionals (grant review committee). The grant review committee reserves the right to recommend conditional funding and partial funding. Funding recommendations will be submitted by the committee to the executive director of the IEDA for consideration and approval. The applicant's authorized official will receive award notification. All funding decisions are final.

## SCORING RUBRIC

### *Eligibility Review*

Applications must demonstrate evidence of the following:

- Applicant is eligible
- Funding request meets eligible project and expense requirements
- Request includes proof of cash match
- Request includes proposal from professional third-party partner
- Project duration does not exceed contract period
- Application is complete and submitted through [IowaGrants.gov](http://IowaGrants.gov)

**Application Review**

The Rural Child Care Planning Grant Scoring Rubric will be used to evaluate applications. Each section has criteria and corresponding point values to ensure a fair review process. The rubric is on a scale of 45 points.

<b>1 - GRANTSMANSHIP &amp; CASE FOR SUPPORT: 5 points possible</b>		
5	3	1
The application is clear, concise, and well composed. Case for support is exemplary and merits investment from the State.	The application is clear. Case for support is adequate.	Application is unclear or poorly composed. Case for support is inadequate or does not merit State investment.

<b>2 – APPLICANT PROFILE: 5 points possible</b>		
5	3	1
Applicant clearly identifies strategic priorities and appropriateness in initiating the study and demonstrates a strong record of progress through relevant achievements.	Applicant identifies relevant notable achievements or strategic priorities.	Applicant does not adequately identify relevant notable achievements or strategic priorities.

<b>3 – TIMING &amp; NEED: 5 points possible</b>		
5	3	1
Proposal clearly identifies recent momentum, demonstrates excellent timing and commitment to active participation and engagement for completion of the project.	Proposal identifies some recent momentum and commitment to participation and engagement in completion of the project.	Proposal does not clearly or adequately identify recent momentum or demonstrates inappropriate timing and commitment to participation and engagement.

<b>4 – STEERING COMMITTEE: 5 points possible</b>		
5	3	1
Proposal clearly identifies an active committee with multiple, diverse partners. Key partner roles and responsibilities are well defined and will enhance the success of the process.	Proposal identifies a committee with multiple, diverse partners. Key partner roles and responsibilities are defined.	Proposal does not identify an active housing committee with multiple, diverse partners. Key partner roles and responsibilities are not well defined.

<b>5 – PURPOSE: 5 points possible</b>		
5	3	1
Proposal clearly explains the identified child care challenge as well as how this study will address the challenge and how the information will be broadly shared publicly.	Proposal adequately explains the identified child care challenge as well as how this study will address the challenge and how the information will be shared publicly.	Proposal does not adequately explain the identified child care challenge or how the information will be shared publicly.

<b>6 – THIRD PARTY PARTNER: 5 points possible</b>		
5	3	1
Proposal identifies professional third-party partner to complete the market study. Partner proposal demonstrates exceptional experience and clear objectives.	Proposal identifies professional third-party partner to complete the market study. Partner proposal demonstrates adequate experience and objectives.	Proposal identifies professional third-party partner to complete the market study. Partner proposal includes minimal information.

<b>7 - BUDGET: 5 points possible</b>		
5	3	1
Project budget and intended use of funds are clear and appropriate.	Project budget and intended use of requested funds are identified and adequate.	Project budget and intended use of requested funds are unclear or inadequate.

<b>8 – BUDGET LOCAL SUPPORT: 5 points possible</b>		
5	3	1
Majority of the applicant match is from local, including county and city government, or private sources.	Over half of the applicant match is from local, including county and city government, or private sources.	Less than half of the applicant match is from local, including county and city government, or private sources.

<b>9 - SUPPORT MATERIAL: 5 points possible</b>		
5	3	1
Support material is highly relevant to the project, of high quality and clearly supports the project's need.	Support material relates to the project and is of average quality.	Support material is not relevant to the project, of poor quality or does not support the project's need.

## CONTACT

Potential applicants are encouraged to review all published material and contact Empower Rural Iowa Director Robin Bostrom at 515.348.6176 or [rural@iowaeda.com](mailto:rural@iowaeda.com) with questions well in advance of application deadline.