



RURAL CHILD CARE MARKET STUDY GRANT PROGRAM 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 first determine the market feasibility for development of a child care center, expansion of an existing one or support for in-home providers.

The Rural Child Care Market Study Grant program seeks to support the use of data and analysis by rural communities to determine the specific needs and solutions for their area. Through greater understanding of their geographic market, demographics, competition and other factors, communities can be armed with the information needed to take proactive steps towards addressing child care challenges. In partnership with [First Children's Finance](#), funding from the program will empower communities to assess their current child care market 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 and First Children's Finance.

Timeline

October 1 | Application Window Opens

Application available through IowaGrants.gov

December 1 | Application Deadline

Deadline to apply for funding is 11:59 p.m.

December 22 | Funding Decision Notification

Applicants notified of decisions by Dec. 22

January 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023 | Funding Period

All project activities and incurred expenses must occur within the eligible contracted funding period of January 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023. Funding is awarded on a reimbursement basis after expenses have been incurred for approved project activities.

Project Goals

The *Child Care Market Analysis and Strategic Plan* by First Children's Finance is a third-party in-depth analysis of the local child care needs, supply and gap. This is used by the community in a facilitated process to develop a strategic plan to address the identified needs.

First Children's Finance will first research existing demographic data and partner with the grantee community to collect data from direct surveys of local parents, employers and child care providers. Detailed information about the local child care gap will help the community determine the number and types of child care spaces that would be reasonable to meet the need.

First Children's Finance will facilitate a series of four strategic planning sessions to help the community develop a vision and strategic goals with detailed action steps, expected outcomes and impacts.

The applicant will receive a full report summarizing the demographics, survey results, the child care gap and the strategic goals with action steps for addressing the need. At the conclusion of the project, First Children's Finance will present the key findings of the market analysis along with the strategic goals in a community meeting coordinated by the Steering Committee.

Eligibility Requirements

Eligible Use of Funding

The Rural Child Care Market Study Grant Program provides funding for market data collection, analysis and development of strategic goals for child care through First Children's Finance.

Eligible Applicants

The following entities are eligible to apply:

- City and county governments or federally recognized tribal governments physically located in Iowa;
- 501(c)3 or 501(c)6 nonprofit agencies and foundations;
- Public and private schools that serve grades pre-K through 12 and 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, 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 Market Study Grant awards include, but are not limited to:

- Applicants must demonstrate the capacity for grants administration.
- Applications must identify and describe any other funding sources for the proposed activities.
- Applications must provide \$5,000 cash match.
- Applications must agree to contract with First Children's Finance for completion of the market study and strategic goals.

Funding

Grant Request Amount

Grant Recipients will be awarded \$10,000. Grantees will receive one market study and one set of goals, regardless of the geographic area submitted or numbers of partnering communities.

Match Requirement

Applicants are required to demonstrate investment in the project process by providing a \$5,000 cash match. The cash match must be secured, dedicated to eligible expenses, a legitimate part of the project and must 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 \$5,000 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 the 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 January 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023. 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 lowagrants.gov. When submitting a claim, the following are required:

- An invoice and proof of payment.
- A status report for the claim period. Status reports must be received once a quarter. If no funds are requested, recipients should still file a status report.
- The IEDA may request additional documentation as needed.

Reporting Requirements

Quarterly Reports

Each quarter, 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 [lowagrants](https://lowagrants.gov) within 120 days of the project completion date.
- The IEDA will 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 submit an application via lowagrants.gov, the online application portal. Applications will not be accepted in any other format. Late, incomplete or ineligible applications will not be accepted. 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, First Children's Finance 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.

Local Child Care Steering Committee

Applicants are asked to establish a local steering committee to guide the process and serve as a liaison between First Children's Finance and the community. It is recommended that the steering committee be comprised of seven to 10 individuals such as elected officials, school administrators, child care providers, chamber or economic development staff, representatives from real estate and finance, non-profits, major employers and residents who also share an interest and commitment in addressing local child care needs. Additional guidance can be provided to grant recipients by First Children's Finance after award.

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 \$5,000 cash match
- Project duration does not exceed contract period
- Application is complete and submitted through IowaGrants.gov

Application Review

The Rural Child Care Market Study 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.

| 1 – APPLICANT PROFILE: 5 points possible | | |
|--|---|--|
| 5 | 3 | 1 |
| Applicant clearly identifies strategic priorities and appropriateness in initiating the study. | Applicant adequately identifies strategic priorities and appropriateness in initiating the study. | Applicant does not adequately identify strategic priorities and appropriateness in initiating the study. |

| 2 – PURPOSE: 5 points possible | | |
|---|--|---|
| 5 | 3 | 1 |
| Proposal clearly identifies 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 identifies 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 identify the identified child care challenge or how the information will be shared publicly. |

| 3 – TIMING: 5 points possible | | |
|---|---|--|
| 5 | 3 | 1 |
| Proposal clearly identifies recent momentum, demonstrating excellent timing for completion of the market study. | Proposal identifies recent momentum, demonstrating appropriate timing for completion of the market study. | Proposal does not adequately identify recent momentum, demonstrating unappropriated timing for completion of the market study. |

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

| 5 – PARTNERS: 5 points possible | | |
|---|---|--|
| 5 | 3 | 1 |
| Proposal identifies and describes in detail the community roles of a variety of partners. | Proposal identifies and briefly describes the roles of a variety of partners. | Proposal does not adequately identify or describe the roles of partners. |

| 6 - BUDGET: 5 points possible | | |
|---|---|---|
| 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. |

| 7 – BUDGET LOCAL SUPPORT: 5 points possible | | |
|--|---|--|
| 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. |

| 8 – CASE FOR SUPPORT: 5 points possible | | |
|---|-------------------------------|--|
| 5 | 3 | 1 |
| Case for support is exemplary and merits investment from the State. | Case for support is adequate. | Case for support is inadequate or does not merit State investment. |

| 9 - GRANTSMANSHIP: 3 points possible | | |
|--|---------------------------|--|
| 5 | 3 | 1 |
| The application is clear, concise and well composed. | The application is clear. | Application is unclear or poorly composed. |

Contact

Potential applicants are encouraged to review all published material and contact Rural Community Revitalization Program Manager Liesl Seabert at 515.348.6154 or rural@iowaeda.com, with questions well in advance of application deadlines.