



Access to Quality Child Care Grant Guidelines

LOW INCOME INVESTMENT FUND



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SECTION I: GENERAL INFORMATION

1.1 Purpose

This funding is provided through the Access to Quality Child Care Grant, funded by the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE). The Low Income Investment Fund (LIIF) has been selected to administer the grant program. The Access to Quality Child Care Grant aims to increase the quality and supply of child care services for infants and toddlers, which may include establishing new or expanding child development facilities serving infants and toddlers. Specifically, this grant seeks to increase the District's supply of quality infant and toddler child care by September 2023, through the provision of sub-grants and technical assistance.

Funding is available to eligible early care and education providers or to current or future providers that plan to open a new child development facility or expand an existing child development facility. The following sub-grants are available:

- [Pre-Development \(for Child Development Centers only\)](#) – for planning, design and other pre-development costs. Available until Oct. 1, 2022.
- [New Center Development](#) – for establishing new child development centers (both existing and new child care providers).
- [Expansion Grants for Child Development Centers](#) – for expanding existing child development centers.
- [New Child Development Home](#) – for establishing a new child development homes.
- [Expansion Grants for Child Development Homes](#) – for expanding existing child development homes.

Currently, grant funding is available for programs that will expand licensed capacity of infant and toddler slots. A subsequent round of funding will be available later in 2022 for licensed centers and homes seeking to enhance the quality of existing slots through major or structural renovation and repair.

1.2 Funding Priorities

Higher priority will be given to current or future child development facilities:

- Located in residential developments wholly or partially funded by the District or in alignment with the District's affordable housing plan and public-private partnerships;
- Who currently serve a minimum of 20 percent of licensed capacity for recipients of subsidized child care as demonstrated in the Completed Site Data form of the application, or who plan to serve at least 20 percent of licensed capacity for recipients of subsidized child care as demonstrated in the Project Impact form of the application;
- Who participate or plan to participate in Capital Quality, DC's Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS);

- Who have a Capital Quality designation of High-Quality or Quality;
- Who offer or plan to offer non-traditional hours;
- Child development facilities with 501(c)(3) nonprofit tax status with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) or have a 501(c)(3) nonprofit fiscal sponsor;
- With projects that will convert classrooms or slots from pre-K/preschool to infant or toddler;
- With projects that will leverage funding from other public agencies, philanthropy, community fundraising, or debt to strengthen the impact of the sub-grants (i.e., create a multiplier effect);
- With projects that have time-bound urgency, such as a limited-time opportunity to sign a lease or acquire a property; and
- Who provide or plan to provide specialized services for children with special needs, at-risk children and/or culturally and linguistically diverse families as described in the application.

1.3 Application Process

Applicants are required to submit an intake form to provide information on their proposed project. LIIF will review the intake form to determine project readiness. A detailed description of the application process and definition of “project readiness” is at the bottom of this section.

All prospective applicants will receive technical assistance as they work to become project-ready. Once the project is ready, LIIF will provide a link to the application. Applicants must complete an application through LIIF’s online grant application platform and submit it along with the required attachments (listed on page 7). LIIF may request additional information as needed. An incomplete application will not be considered for funding. If assistance is needed in filling out the application, please contact childcareDC@liifund.org and a program officer will respond. LIIF expects to receive intake forms from more interested applicants than can be awarded grants with available funding. The intake form will remain open as long as funding remains available. Completion of an intake form is not equivalent to completing an application. If and when funding is exhausted, LIIF will notify any remaining prospective applicants and technical assistance will continue to be available to support their projects.

For ready projects that complete applications, LIIF will evaluate each complete application promptly and deliver a response in writing approximately four to six weeks from the date of receipt. As part of the selection process, LIIF will also conduct a site visit at a pre-arranged, mutually convenient time.

Applicants whose requests are not funded may contact LIIF to discuss the reason(s) for the denial. Applicants may reapply for funding in future rounds (if available) and are eligible to receive technical assistance.

1.3.1 Application Process in Detail

Phase 1 – Intake and Technical Assistance

- Prospective applicant completes intake form describing the proposed project.
- LIIF staff reviews intake form to determine whether project is ready for an application.

- To be considered “Ready” the following conditions must be met:

Pre-Development Grants:

- For pre-development requests, the project will be considered ready if the prospective applicant has three bids from licensed architects or registered design professionals or has three bids for the services for which they are requesting funding. Requests for pre-development funding will be available as long as allotted pre-development funding remains available or until Oct. 1, 2022, whichever occurs first. This allows projects awarded pre-development grants the best chance at the opportunity to apply for a subsequent grant to fund the construction project before the grant closes.

New Center Development, Center Expansion, New Child Development Home and Child Development Home Expansion Grants:

- Prospective applicants must have a site identified and have site control. Site control may be a deed, signed lease, or signed Letter of Intent (LOI). LIIF cautions prospective applicants against signing a lease for a site prior to receiving a grant award as grant funding is not guaranteed.
 - Prospective applicants who have a site identified may request a site visit from LIIF prior to gaining site control to receive technical assistance.
 - Please see the “Criteria for Funding” section under each grant to learn more about lease terms that are acceptable for each grant type.
 - If leasing a site, applicants must have permission from the property owner to complete the project.
- Prospective applicants must have a written business plan for the child care facility that is specific to the constraints and opportunities of the chosen site.
 - If the prospective applicant currently operates a child care program, the business plan and supporting documents must show that the existing business is in good standing, is operating at or near full capacity and is earning enough revenue to cover all expenses.
 - Prospective applicants may request a business plan template.
- Prospective applicants must have a project budget for the renovation of the site that shows all sources of funding (including the requested grant amount) and all the uses of funding.
 - Prospective applicants may request a project budget template.

- Prospective applicants should consider the following funding guidelines when developing their project budgets:
 - Homes: \$6,000 per new infant/toddler slot created.
 - New centers: \$12,000 per new infant/toddler slot created up to a maximum of \$300,000 in most cases. Sub-grants up to \$500,000 may be available depending on the number of new infant/toddler slots created, priority status of the project and availability of funding.
 - Expansion of existing centers: \$8,000 per new infant/toddler slot created up to \$200,000.
 - This guidance will be updated to include award amounts for renovation and repair when that grant launches later in 2022.
- Prospective applicants must have a program budget for the operation of the child care program at the site. For prospective applicants seeking funding to open a new facility, the program budget must be a month-by-month cash flow budget that shows the initial ramp-up phase as the program builds to full enrollment. If the prospective applicant advances to the application stage, proof of funding to cover operating shortfalls during the ramp-up period will be requested by LIIF.
- LIIF, in coordination with the Department of Buildings (DOB) and OSSE, must review the proposed site and determine there are no obvious barriers to the operation of child care as planned at the site.
- The project must be able to be completed within six months of receiving a grant award.
- If the project is not ready, LIIF will support with technical assistance as the prospective applicant moves toward readiness.
- If the project is ready, LIIF will coordinate a site visit and may invite DOB and OSSE if applicable.
- Once the site visit is complete, if the project remains viable and ready, LIIF staff will send the application link to the prospective applicant.

Phase 2 - Application

- Ready projects will be sent an application form to complete through LIIF's online application portal.
 - A detailed list of required attachments is below.

- LIIF staff will review completed applications and deliver a written response within four to six weeks. Expedited review may be available for projects on urgent timelines.

Grant Application Required Attachments

- A. Business plan documenting: (1) expansion feasibility and financial projections; (2) financial and organizational viability for child care operations for the term of the sub-grant; and (3) longterm sustainability beyond the term of the sub-grant;
- B. Project budget that includes all project expenses and the sources of funding planned to cover each expense, including the grant being requested;
- C. Copy of license(s) to operate child development facility and/or evidence that the applicant has completed OSSE's licensing orientation for child development facilities;
- D. Copy of lease, deed of trust, LOI or other applicable documents showing site control or intent to lease;
- E. If applicable, written approval from property owner for renovation or construction work to be done;
- F. If applicable, proof of 501(c)(3) nonprofit tax status from applicant or the fiscal sponsor (if using fiscal sponsor, please include a letter from 501(c)(3) fiscal sponsor detailing the nature of the support);
- G. Operating budget outlining current revenue and expenses;
- H. Most recent audited financials or current certified financial statements (for homes, Schedule C of most recent tax return);
- I. Before photos of the areas for which you are seeking funding;
- J. Site evaluation (when applicable) – feasibility analysis that includes physical characteristics of the property relevant to your project such as zoning, land use, building code, licensing requirements, title inspection (if taking ownership of a new site), soils, geological and environmental reports;
- K. Conceptual design (for major renovation or construction) – site plan, floor plans, building elevations, work write-up with detailed specifications, building design summary and preliminary estimate of probable development costs;
- L. If you are requesting grant funds for program materials, please provide price verification (e.g., catalogue pages, pricing sheets, quotes, etc.);
- M. Construction timeline and plan for child care operations during construction; and

- N. Three bids for construction costs – all bids must include contact information (name, address and phone number) and license or professional certification number (contractors must be licensed in DC, insured and, if they have employees, must carry workers compensation).
- a. Note: If application is approved, an insurance certificate with your agency identified as additional insured including workers compensation and professional liability insurance will be required from the contractor.

1.4 If a Sub-Grant Is Awarded

The grantee must sign a sub-grant agreement and must fulfill all terms of that agreement, including but not limited to:

- Maintaining full compliance with all applicable federal and local laws and regulations, including OSSE’s regulations governing the licensing of child development facilities (5A DCMR §100 et seq.) and the provisions of each respective early childhood education initiative, as applicable;
- Aligning sub-grant expenditures with the approved budget from the sub-grant application and sub-grant agreement;
- Submitting a use of funds report within 180 days (six months) of award date detailing how the funds were used;
- Submitting a status report by Sept. 15, 2023; and
- Such other and further general provisions as LIIF and/or OSSE may require (including, but not limited to all applicable federal and local laws and regulations).

If the grantee defaults on any of the terms of the sub-grant agreement during the term of the sub-grant, sub-grant funds will be due and payable to LIIF in full immediately. If services are provided for a portion of the term, only a pro-rata portion of the sub-grant will be repayable.

SECTION II: SUB-GRANT TYPES

2.1 Pre-Development (For Child Development Centers Only)

The Access to Quality Child Care Center Pre-Development Sub-Grant supports the planning and development of viable, well-designed child care facilities and sites within DC. Sub-grants of up to \$30,000 are available.

2.1.1 Eligible Providers

- Are licensed by OSSE to operate a child development facility in the District or intend to submit an application for a license to operate a child development facility;
- Maintain compliance with all applicable laws and regulations and are not operating with a restricted license, if already licensed by OSSE to operate a child development facility in the District;
- Prioritize serving District families;

- Serve or will serve children between birth and age 3 (infants and toddlers);
- Demonstrate one or more funding priorities; and
- Demonstrate project readiness as defined in section 1.3.

2.1.2 Eligible Uses

- Planning and pre-development costs including feasibility studies, business plan development, permits, architectural services and related costs;
- Consultant(s) to assist with the physical development and/or licensing of the facility (e.g., project manager);
- Any additional uses identified by LIIF staff in conjunction with agreement from OSSE.

2.1.3 Ineligible Uses

- Day-to-day operating costs such as salaries, rent and food purchases;
- Working capital to cover shortfalls or delays in payments from families, government agencies or other funding sources;
- Non-permanent supplies (e.g., art materials) and other consumable materials such as paint, cleaning supplies, paper, etc.;
- Professional development;
- Purchase of unrelated equipment (e.g., televisions, DVD players/recorders);
- Vehicle or transportation expenses;
- Repayment of loans or reimbursement of previously incurred expenses;
- Any expense that does not support increasing infant and toddler spaces; and
- Indirect or administrative costs.

2.1.4 Criteria for Funding

- The applicant must intend to increase the number of licensed quality infant or toddler slots as described in the application;
- The applicant must demonstrate financial and organizational viability through the project phase, and for child care operations for the term of the sub-grant as demonstrated by project budget, business plan, operating budget, most recent audited financials or current certified financial statements, if available;
- The applicant must demonstrate that sub-grant funds are necessary to undertake or complete the project as described in the application.

2.2 New Center Development Grants

The Access to Quality Child Care New Center Development Sub-Grant supports the planning and development of viable, well-designed child care facilities and sites in DC. In most cases, sub-grants between \$100,000 and \$300,000 are available to eligible child care providers. Sub-grants up to \$500,000 may be available depending on the number of new infant/toddler slots created, priority status of the project and availability of funding. Awards will not exceed \$12,000 per infant/toddler slot created.

2.2.1. Eligible Providers

- Are licensed by OSSE to operate a child development facility in the District or intend to submit an application for a license to operate a child development facility;
- Have attended an OSSE Licensing Orientation, if not already licensed by OSSE to operate a child development facility in the District;
- Maintain compliance with all applicable laws and regulations and are not operating with a restricted license, if already licensed by OSSE to operate a child development facility in the District;
- Prioritize serving District families;
- Serve or will serve children between birth and age 3 (infants and toddlers);
- Demonstrate one or more funding priorities; and
- Demonstrate project readiness as defined in section 1.3.

2.2.2. Eligible Uses

- Planning and pre-development costs including feasibility studies, business plan development, permits, architectural services and related costs;
- Site acquisition;
- Facility and site construction or renovation costs (including outdoor play spaces);
- Consultant(s) to assist with the physical development and/or licensing of the facility (e.g., project manager);
- Physical renovations to increase the facility's licensed capacity to serve infants and toddlers;
- Renovations, equipment and furnishings required to expand licensed capacity to infants and toddlers; and
- Any additional uses identified by LIIF staff in conjunction with agreement from OSSE.

2.2.3. Ineligible Uses

- Day-to-day operating costs such as salaries, rent and food purchases;
- Working capital to cover shortfalls or delays in payments from families, government agencies or other funding sources;
- Non-permanent supplies (e.g., art materials) and other consumable materials such as paint, cleaning supplies, paper, etc.;
- Professional development;
- Purchase of unrelated equipment (e.g., computers, iPads, televisions, DVD/CD players/recorders);
- Office equipment and/or furniture;
- Vehicle or transportation expenses;
- Repayment of loans or reimbursement of previously incurred expenses;
- Certain costs related to retrofitting (e.g., underpinning and excavation);
- Any expense that does not support increasing infant and toddler spaces; and

- Indirect or administrative costs.

2.2.4 Criteria for Funding

- The applicant must increase the number of quality licensed infant or toddler slots as described in the application;
- The applicant must demonstrate financial and organizational viability through the project phase, and for child care operations for the term of the sub-grant as demonstrated by project budget, business plan, operating budget, most recent audited financials or current certified financial statements;
- The applicant must demonstrate that sub-grant funds are necessary to undertake or complete the project as described in the application;
- The applicant must provide evidence that it has control of the designated child care site for the term of the sub-grant and beyond (e.g., a lease with a minimum remaining term of five years for sub-grants under \$100,000; a lease with minimum term of 10 years for sub-grants in the amount of \$100,000 and less than \$200,000; a lease with minimum term of 15 years for sub-grants in the amount of \$200,000 and less than \$500,000) as demonstrated by the terms of the lease submitted with the application); and
- The applicant must demonstrate long-term sustainability beyond the term of the sub-grant as demonstrated by the business plan, budgets and Project Impact form in the application.

2.3 Expansion Grants for Child Development Centers

The Access to Quality Child Care Center Expansion Sub-Grant supports the planning and development of viable, well-designed child care facilities and sites within DC. Grants of up to \$200,000 are available to eligible child care providers (approximately \$8,000 per infant/toddler slot created).

2.3.1 Eligible Providers

- Are licensed by OSSE to operate a child development facility in the District or have applied for a license to operate a child development center;
- Maintain compliance with all applicable laws and regulations and are not operating with a restricted license;
- Prioritize serving District families;
- Serve or will serve children between birth and age 3 (infants and toddlers);
- Demonstrate one or more funding priorities; and
- Demonstrate project readiness as defined in section 1.3.

2.3.2 Eligible Uses

- Physical renovations to increase the facility's licensed capacity to serve infants and toddlers;
- Fixtures, furnishings and equipment required to expand licensed capacity to infants and toddlers;

- Playground/outdoor upgrades (e.g., fixed equipment, shade, surfacing, fencing/hazard enclosure, gates, landscaping, irrigation, garden/green upgrades);
- Security equipment such as cameras, buzzers, gates and fences;
- Kitchen renovations and commercial equipment upgrades;
- Improvements that increase the accessibility of the program to children, parents, guardians or staff;
- Government agency citation compliance; and
- Any additional uses identified by LIIF staff in conjunction with agreement from OSSE.

2.3.3 Ineligible Uses

- Day-to-day operating costs such as salaries, rent and food purchases;
- Working capital to cover shortfalls or delays in payments from families, government agencies or other funding sources;
- Non-permanent supplies (e.g., art materials) and other consumable materials such as paint, cleaning supplies, paper, etc.;
- Professional development;
- Purchase of unrelated equipment (e.g., computers, iPads, televisions, DVD/CD players/recorders);
- Office equipment and/or furniture;
- Vehicle or transportation expenses;
- Repayment of loans or reimbursement of previously incurred expenses;
- Certain costs related to retrofitting (e.g., underpinning and excavation);
- Any expense that does not support increasing infant and toddler spaces; and
- Indirect or administrative costs.

2.3.4 Criteria for Funding

- The applicant must increase the number of quality licensed infant or toddler slots as described in the application;
- The applicant must demonstrate financial and organizational viability through the project phase, and for child care operations for the term of the sub-grant as demonstrated by project budget, business plan, operating budget, most recent audited financials or current certified financial statements;
- The applicant must demonstrate that sub-grant funds are necessary to undertake or complete the project as described in the application;
- The applicant must provide evidence that it has control of the designated child care site for the term of the sub-grant and beyond (e.g., a lease with a minimum remaining term of five years for sub-grants less than \$100,000; a lease with a minimum term of 10 years for sub-grants in the amount of \$100,000-<\$150,000) as demonstrated by the terms of the lease submitted with the application;
- The applicant must demonstrate long-term sustainability beyond the term of the sub-grant as demonstrated by the business plan, budgets and Project Impact form in the application; and

- The applicant must obtain all necessary permits for the proposed project.

2.4 New Child Development Home

The Access to Quality New Child Care Child Development Home Sub-Grant supports the planning and development of viable, well-designed child care facilities and sites within DC. In most cases, child development homes are eligible for up to \$6,000 per infant/toddler slot created.

2.4.1 Eligible Providers

- Currently maintain a Home Occupancy Permit (HOP) or will submit an application for a HOP;
- Have attended an OSSE Licensing Orientation and intend to submit an application for a child care license;
- Prioritize serving District families;
- Serve or will serve children between birth and age 3 (infants and toddlers);
- Demonstrate one or more funding priorities; and
- Demonstrate project readiness as defined in section 1.3.

2.4.2 Eligible Uses

- Physical construction renovations to increase the child development home's licensed capacity to serve infants and toddlers to include construction of a fire code-compliant second exit, or code-compliant conversion of existing unused space into program space;
- Improvements to existing licensed homes to ensure they comply with the fire and life safety requirements of Appendix M of the DC Building Code (LIIF can provide this document, upon request);
- Renovations, sprinkler systems, outdoor play area improvements, equipment, furnishings and materials required to expand licensed capacity to infants and toddlers; and
- Any additional uses identified by LIIF with agreement from OSSE.

2.4.3 Ineligible Uses

- Day-to-day operating costs such as salaries, rent and food purchases;
- Working capital to cover shortfalls or delays in payments from families, government agencies or other funding sources;
- Non-permanent supplies (e.g., art materials) and other consumable materials such as cleaning supplies, paper, etc.;
- Professional development;
- Purchase of unrelated equipment (e.g., computers, iPads, televisions, DVD/CD players/recorders);
- Office equipment and/or furniture;
- Vehicle or transportation expenses;
- Repayment of loans or reimbursement of previously incurred expenses;
- Certain costs related to retrofitting (e.g., underpinning and excavation);

- Repairs or renovations to parts of the home not used for child care;
- Any expense that does not support increasing infant and toddler spaces; and
- Indirect or administrative costs.

2.4.4 Criteria for Funding

- The applicant must increase the number of quality licensed infant or toddler slots as described in the application;
- The applicant must demonstrate financial and organizational viability through the project phase, and for child care operations for the term of the sub-grant as demonstrated by project budget, business plan, operating budget and most recent tax return (Schedule C);
- The applicant must demonstrate that sub-grant funds are necessary to undertake or complete the project as described in the application;
- The applicant must obtain permits for the proposed project, if the grant is used to finance renovations;
- The renovation project must be approved by the property owner in writing, if the grant is used to finance renovations and the applicant leases the site;
- The applicant must provide evidence that it has control of the designated child care site for the term of the sub-grant and beyond (e.g., a lease with a minimum remaining term of two years)¹; and
- The applicant must demonstrate longterm sustainability beyond the term of the sub-grant as demonstrated by the business plan, budgets and the application.

2.5 Expansion Grants for Child Development Homes

The Access to Quality Child Care Child Development Home Sub-Grant supports the planning and development of viable, well-designed child care facilities and sites within DC. In most cases, child development homes are eligible for up to \$6,000 per infant/toddler slot created.

2.5.1 Eligible Providers

- Currently maintain an HOP and intend to submit an application for an expanded HOP;
- Maintain compliance with all applicable laws and regulations and are not operating with a restricted license;
- Prioritize serving District families;
- Serve or will serve children between birth and age 3 (infants and toddlers);
- Demonstrate one or more funding priorities; and
- Demonstrate project readiness as defined in section 1.3.

¹ If lease term is less than two years, applicants must submit a current lease and a letter from the property owner stating they intend to renew the lease through the sub-grant term requirement.

2.5.2 Eligible Uses

- Physical construction or renovations to increase the child development home's licensed capacity to serve infants and toddlers to include construction of a fire code-compliant second exit, or code-compliant conversion of existing unused space into program space;
- Improvements to existing licensed homes to ensure they comply with the fire and life safety requirements of Appendix M of the DC Building Code (LIIF can provide this document, upon request);
- Renovations, sprinkler systems, outdoor play area improvements, equipment, furnishings and materials required to expand licensed capacity to infants and toddlers; and
- Any additional uses identified by LIIF with agreement from OSSE.

2.5.3 Ineligible Uses

- Day-to-day operating costs such as salaries, rent and food purchases;
- Working capital to cover shortfalls or delays in payments from families, government agencies or other funding sources;
- Non-permanent supplies (e.g., art materials) and other consumable materials such as cleaning supplies, paper, etc.;
- Professional development;
- Purchase of unrelated equipment (e.g., computers, iPads, televisions, DVD/CD players/recorders);
- Office equipment and/or furniture;
- Vehicle or transportation expenses;
- Repayment of loans or reimbursement of previously incurred expenses;
- Certain costs related to retrofitting (e.g., underpinning and excavation);
- Repairs or renovations to parts of the home not used for child care;
- Any expense that does not support increasing infant and toddler spaces; and
- Indirect or administrative costs.

2.5.4 Criteria for Funding

- The applicant must increase the number of quality licensed infant or toddler slots as described in the application;
- The applicant must demonstrate financial and organizational viability through the project phase, and for child care operations for the term of the sub-grant as demonstrated by project budget, business plan, operating budget and most recent tax return (Schedule C);
- The applicant must demonstrate that sub-grant funds are necessary to undertake or complete the project as described in the application;
- The applicant must obtain permits for the proposed project, if the grant is used to finance renovations;
- The renovation project must be approved by the property owner in writing, if the grant is used to finance renovations and the applicant leases the site;

- The applicant must provide evidence that it has control of the designated child care site for the term of the sub-grant and beyond (e.g., a lease with a minimum remaining term of two years)²; and
- The applicant must demonstrate long-term sustainability beyond the term of the sub-grant as demonstrated by the business plan, budgets and the application.

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² If lease term is less than two years, applicants must submit a current lease and a letter from the property owner stating they intend to renew the lease through the sub-grant term requirement.