

Rural Early Learning Facility Improvement Project Guidebook

GOALS

The Rural Early Learning Facility Improvement Project seeks to make significant and long-lasting impacts on the quantity and quality of child care available in Coos, Curry, Douglas, Klamath, and Lake counties. This project seeks to support child care programs in achieving one or more of the following goals:

- Become licensed and serve more children
- Increase licensed capacity and serve more children(RF to CF or CF to CC)
- Maintain capacity and make improvements to provide a safer, or more appropriate, indoor and/or outdoor environment for children

ROUND 1 & 2 - PROJECT FUND PARTICIPANTS

Programs that received grant funding in Round 1 (2021-2022)of the Rural Facility Improvement Project, also known as Project Fund, are eligible to participate.

Programs that received grant funding in Round 2 (2023-2024)of the Rural Facility Improvement Project, are **not eligible** to participate.

Moving forward, programs will be eligible to reapply for the Rural Facility Improvement Project every **two years**. The Administrator may waive this requirement if a significant event occurs in a program and additional funding would be highly beneficial.

LICENSED OR COMMITTED TO BECOMING LICENSED

Eligible programs must be licensed with satisfactory compliance histories, committed to becoming licensed or planning to change license type by the end of the project. Early Head Start, Head Start and school districts are **not eligible**. Please note that tribal programs are exempt from any licensing requirements.

Licensed programs with **three or more serious valid findings in the last 24 months are ineligible**.

Serious valid findings are compliance violations that are categorized as one or more of the following issues:

- Children are in imminent danger
- More children in care than allowed by law
- Corporal punishment of other specific forms of inappropriate discipline are being used
- Children are not supervised
- Extreme unsanitary conditions
- Multiple or serious fire, health, or safety hazards are present
- Adults are present who are not enrolled in the Central Background Registry
- Providing care without being licensed with regulatory agency as required by rule

GRANT PROPOSAL

Proposals must be well developed and align with the Rural Facility Improvement Project goals and requirements. To ensure proposals will result in the desired outcomes, approvals from licensing specialists, CCR&Rs, Hubs, or other partners are required. Approvals by licensing specialists are needed for non-licensed

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programs working towards becoming licensed or for programs increasing their licensing capacity or opening another location. Approvals by licensing specialists, CCR&R, Hubs, or other key partners are required for proposals that will provide a safer or more appropriate indoor and/or outdoor environment for children.

AWARD GRANT

REQUIREMENTS FOR AWARD PHASE

Before child care programs receive their grant funds, the following requirements must be met, itemized by grant type. These requirements, along with the maintenance of all application requirements, are meant to demonstrate commitment and support the development of funding requests.

Preservation & Enhancement Grants \$5,000 - \$10,000	Expansion Grants \$15,000- \$25,000
Be meeting, or committed to meeting, all grant requirements	
Submit completed grant application	
	Licensed for more than 1 year
	Sustainability Plan
	Match of 20%

APPROVALS

To support programs in selecting projects with the most significant impact and supporting them in making necessary considerations, approvals from local partners in early care and education are strongly recommended. Approvals for preservation and enhancement projects can be completed by state licensing specialists, CCR&R, Hub, or Inclusive Partners staff. Providers can also work with the grant administrator to get approval.

LICENSED FOR MORE THAN 1 YEAR

Programs requesting funding greater than \$10,000 must have been licensed and in business for the **past year or more**. Administrators will verify licensing history in Find Child Care Oregon.

PROJECT COMPLETION

REQUIREMENTS FOR COMPLETION PHASE

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This phase documents the completion of participation requirements.

Preservation & Enhancement Grants \$5,000 - \$10,000	Expansion Grants Up to \$25,000
Be or become licensed or change license type	
Identified in Find Child Care Oregon, as willing to accept ERDC and children with special needs	
Complete Quarterly Reports	
Complete Business Sustainability Activity	
Submit Project Completion Report	

LICENSING REQUIREMENT

All participating programs must be licensed, become licensed, or change license type as the Rural Facility Improvement Project requirement. Tribal programs are exempt from this requirement.

PARENT REFERRAL SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

All participating programs must be identified in their state's parent referral system as a program willing to accept subsidies and serve children with special needs. Will to accept means that you have not been approved or have not applied for ERDC, but are willing to go through the ERDC process.

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BUSINESS SUSTAINABILITY

The business sustainability requirement is intended to advance the professional knowledge and practices of programs. A list of possible activities is itemized below; programs may also self-identify appropriate alternatives.

For programs seeking \$10,000 or less, **at least one activity** must be documented as complete.

For programs seeking more than \$10,000 in funding, **two or more** activities must be completed.

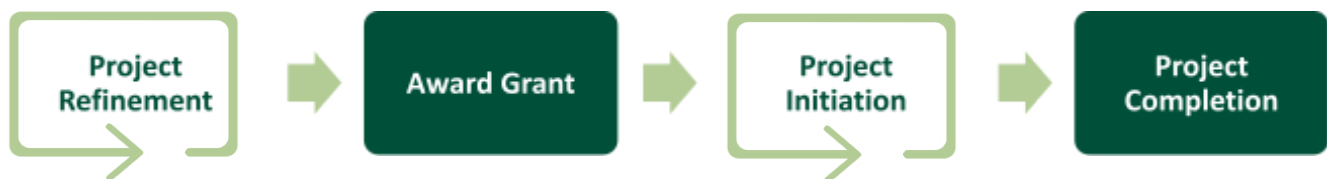
- Establish a business checking account
- Complete two or more hours of business training
- Develop an operating budget that captures projected revenue and expenditures for the next year
- Join or be actively participating in a shared services network
- Join or be actively participating in a Focused Child Care Network
- Complete the Program Administration Scale (PAS) or Business Administration Scale for Family Child Care (BAS)
- Increase star rating in Spark

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PROJECT PHASES

You will progress through the following phases as you participate in the Rural Facility Improvement Project. Now that your application has been selected, you have entered the Project Refinement Phase. In this phase, you will work on making adjustments to your project plan to align with the grant requirements. Once completed, you will be awarded grant funding. In the Project Initiation phase, you will begin your project. This phase could be relatively short or many weeks long, depending on your project type. During this period, we will send you quarterly update reports to complete, so we keep informed of your progress. These reports are quick, likely taking five minutes or less to complete. Once your project is finished, you will move into the final phase, which includes submitting photographs, and receipts and telling us about the impact this project has had on your program.

We are available to support you in your work at any point in time. We know you likely have local support from your CCR&R, Hub, Inclusive Partners, or Licensing staff, but we are always here to assist you.



OVERVIEW OF GRANT TYPES

Two types of facility improvement grants have been developed to maintain and expand the supply of quality child care in your community.

The Preservation and Enhancement Grant ranges from \$5,000 - \$10,000. This grant is intended to support child care programs that cannot or do not want to increase their licensing capacity or providers who are looking to become licensed.

Expansion Grants are for child care programs that have been licensed for a **year or more** and want to increase their licensed capacity and expand their business. Moving up in license is required (e.g. RF to CF or CF to CC). The Expansion Grant ranges from \$15,000- \$25,000

NOT ALLOWABLE

REIMBURSEMENT

Reimbursement of any sort is not allowed with this grant. We ask that you hold off on your project until you are notified that you have been approved for funding and receive your funds. Once you receive payment, you can begin your project.

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ALLOWABLE EXPENSES

CONSTRUCTION

Construction is defined as the erection of a facility that does not currently exist. Examples include constructing a new building on the property owned by the child care program.

MAJOR RENOVATION

Major Renovation is defined as:

- Structural changes to the foundation, roof, floor, exterior, or load-bearing walls of a facility, or the extension of a facility to increase its floor area; or
- Extensive alteration of a facility such as to significantly change its function and purpose, even if such renovation does not include any structural change.

MINOR RENOVATION

Minor Renovation is defined as a facility improvement which are not specified under the definitions of construction or major remodeling. Examples are provided in the following list:

Indoors

- Heating, cooling, and/or ventilation issues
- Remediating lead paint and/or lead pipes
- Installing room dividers
- Installing age-appropriate plumbing, such as child-sized toilets and sinks
- Installing handwashing stations
- Flooring
- Painting
- Water leak mitigation (windows, roof leak, drywall repair)
- Fixed equipment (washers, dryers, refrigerators, freezers, dishwashers, stoves)
- Storage
- Issues identified by licensing or other regulatory agencies

Outdoors

- Purchasing play equipment to improve outdoor spaces
- Creating an outdoor area with protection from the elements
- Fencing/hazard enclosures
- Storage
- Surface improvements (grass, outdoor carpet, sand, cement, decking)