



Child Care Expansion Grant for the Greater Bemidji Region REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

Greater Bemidji is seeking proposals from qualified organizations and individuals, including area businesses, non-profit organizations, child care centers, and family child care providers to open and operate or expand and operate child care services in the region.

Matching grants of up to \$100,000 will be available, with priority given to proposals serving infants (six weeks to 12 months for family child care and six weeks to 16 months for child care centers) and toddlers (12 months to 24 months for family child care and 16 months to 33 months for child care centers). Grants are available to new providers, existing providers expanding capacity, or existing providers changing license type to increase slots available. Eligible use of grant funds include: building construction or renovation expenses, leasing costs, kitchen updates or required equipment, care center equipment/furnishings, and outdoor play space configuration or equipment.

Background:

Beltrami County is home to approximately 2,300 children under the age of five whose parents are actively engaged in the workforce (single working parent or two-parent households where both parents earn income). Ensuring working parents have access to quality child care choices is an important strategy to retain and grow the region's workforce in an already tight labor market. The availability of quality child care brings people into the workforce and enhances the desirability of the Bemidji region for working parents. Yet, according to an analysis conducted by First Children's Finance (2022), Beltrami County faces a gap of over 1,200 child care slots for children under five years of age, and this gap has remained consistent over the recent past. (Note: this gap does not acknowledge care provided through other informal means, e.g. grandparents, other adult relatives, neighbors, etc, which national statistics suggest could represent approximately 21% of primary child care arrangements.) In recognition of the importance child care plays in supporting economic development, Greater Bemidji sought and received funding through the Minnesota Department of Economic Development's (DEED) Child Care Economic Development Grant program to help increase the number of child care slots in the region.

Proposal:

This Request for Proposals (RFP) is intended to establish a short list of qualified entities with proven capacity to meet Greater Bemidji's goals. Greater Bemidji will review submitted proposals, convene a team to review top-qualified applicants, and then determine whether an award will be made. All award recipients will sign grant agreements with Greater Bemidji.

Proposers are encouraged to think creatively and strategically about how best to approach meeting Greater Bemidji's goals, for example, working with a consortium of local area businesses, focusing on infants only, etc. Greater Bemidji is aware of possible space in the community that could be configured to accommodate a new child care facility, and proposers are encouraged to contact Greater Bemidji for more information.

Proposals should include a description of the following:

- Amount of requested match (50% to be provided by grantee);
- Proposal scope and overview, including children served (general community v. employees);
- Expertise and experience of project team;
- Plan to fund, construct, renovate, or expand child care facility, including location;
- Plan to ensure facility complies with licensing requirements;
- Project timeline;
- Plan to operate the child care facility;
- Staffing models and hours of care; and,
- Breakdown of age of children served.

Proposals Submission:

Proposals should be emailed to grtrbemidjiapps@gmail.com. Complete your application using our online form located at [Child Care Expansion Grant Application Form](#). If you choose to email an uploaded written response, please include the principal contact name, address, phone number, and email address of the applicant organization.

Except as otherwise required by law, proposals received will not be shared, and to the extent legally allowed, will be kept confidential.

Proposals will be accepted until funds are depleted.

Grant Awards:

Priority will be given to proposals that expand care to infants and toddlers. Criteria to be evaluated for grant distribution include:

- Demonstrated experience or quality of plan to bring appropriate resources and knowledge to the project;
- Active child care center or family care license, or plan to obtain license approval;
- Time frame and sustainability of project;
- Grant funds per new available child care slot;
- Number of new infant, toddler, preschooler child care slots created;
- Number of new child care worker jobs created;
- Number of existing child care worker jobs retained.

Greater Bemidji will monitor project progress and implementation annually. Grant repayment will be required should implementation and sustainability of the project not meet the grant's contractual requirements.

Greater Bemidji reserves the rights to reject any and all proposals, amend this RFP as necessary, contract with any organization responding to this RFP for all or portions of the services requested, reject any proposal as non-responsive, seek additional proposals from, or contract with, any organization not participating in this process, and reserves the right not to issue any grant. Greater Bemidji makes no representation that participation in the RFP process will lead to an award or contract.