

DHHS Child Care Start-Up and Expansion Grant APPLICANT SCORE GUIDE

Use this guide to prepare your application. Proposals are evaluated on several criteria, with a maximum score of 100 points. **A minimum score of 70 is required for funding eligibility.** The following tips will help you provide clear and thorough responses in each section.

SECTION 1: COMMUNITY IMPACT STATEMENT (10 Points)

Write one page or less describing how your program will impact the community.

Your narrative should address all items below:

- What type of program are you opening (family child care home I/II or a child care center), and where will it be located?
- What are the specific needs for child care in your area, and what have you learned about the families who require these services?
- How will your program connect with, support, and collaborate with the surrounding community, including schools, churches, local businesses, the Chamber of Commerce, libraries, and recreation programs?
- How will you network and build relationships with other local child care programs and professional organizations?
- How many children will your program serve, and what will their age range be?
- How do you plan to find and recruit families to enroll in your program?

Required Letters:

- **Two community letters:** Must be on official letterhead, signed and dated (both electronic and physical signatures are accepted), confirming the need for child care in your area. These can come from schools, churches, employers, local government, or community organizations.
- **One personal letter:** Must come from someone who is not a family member and who knows your ability to provide quality child care. Must be signed and dated (both electronic and physical signatures are accepted).

SECTION 2: PROGRAM DESCRIPTION (50 Points)

Write a detailed narrative describing what your program will look like and how it will benefit the children and families you serve.

Your narrative should address all items below:

- Provide an overview of your child care program, specifying the type of care offered and the individual needs of infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and school-age children. Include information about your facility's room layout, outdoor area features, and the equipment and materials available to children in your program.
- How does each age group benefit emotionally, socially, physically, and intellectually from participating in your program?
- How will you incorporate Nebraska's Early Learning Guidelines into your daily activities?
- How will you provide services to parents and families? How will you communicate with them, what policies will you have in place, and how will families be encouraged to participate?
- If you will serve children with special needs, describe how your program will support their individual needs.
- Describe your current professional development plan for yourself and your staff, including any training you plan to complete in the next 12 months.

- Do you have a new employee orientation? If so, please describe your onboarding process and highlight the key topics or activities included in the orientation.

Required, Formal Written Daily School Schedule:

You must submit a written daily school or program schedule for each age group you will serve. The schedule must show structured daily activities, learning time, meals, rest periods, and transitions.

SECTION 3: BUSINESS PLAN AND NARRATIVE (30 Points)

You must complete the **Business Plan Form** included in the application packet and write a **Business Narrative** explaining it. *The form asks you to project your income and expenses for the next 12 months.*

Business Plan Form:

- Fill in all projected expenses for the next 12 months, including salaries, rent, insurance, food, supplies, advertising, utilities, etc.
- Fill in all projected income, including private fees, Child Care Subsidy, USDA Food Program, grants, and any other sources.
- **Child Care Subsidy Income Section:** You are required to enter a projected dollar amount for Child Care Subsidy income on the Business Plan Form. Please refer to the child care subsidy rates available on the website for accurate information <https://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/Child-Care-Providers.aspx>.

Once funded, providers must remain in business and maintain a Child Care Subsidy Enrollment for three (3) consecutive years.

Business Plan Narrative:

- Write a narrative that explains your projected entry on the Business Plan Form.
- Describe each major expense and income source.
Describe how you will recruit new families and increase your enrollment.
- Describe and explain how you will cover your costs during the first 12 months.

SECTION 4: BUDGET (10 Points)

The budget page must list every item for which you are requesting grant funds. Be specific.

- List each item, including two vendor estimates and the actual price for each.
- **For any item \$100 or over:** You must include two written estimates and photos from both vendors showing the item.
- **Start-up costs, if applicable:** Complete the start-up costs section of the budget page and attach a written justification. If this does not apply to you, skip this section.
- **Building modifications, if applicable:** Complete the building modifications section with two written itemized estimates and documentation showing why the modification is needed. If this does not apply to you, skip this section.

Note: Grant funds do not cover tax, shipping, or handling costs. You cannot request reimbursement for anything that has already been purchased before the grant is awarded.

BEFORE YOU MAIL, SUBMISSION CHECKLIST	
☐	Page 1 of application fully completed, signed, and dated
☐	Background check (Abuse and Neglect Central Registry self-check) completed and included
☐	SAM Unique Entity ID (UEI) Form included
☐	W-9 and ACH Enrollment Form completed with voided check or bank letter attached
☐	Two letters on official letterhead confirming community need, signed and dated
☐	One personal letter from a non-family member supporting your ability to provide quality child care, signed and dated
☐	Community Impact Statement narrative included
☐	Program description narrative included with formal written daily school schedule for each age group
☐	Business Plan Form completed, including projected Child Care Subsidy income amount
☐	Business Plan narrative included
☐	Budget page completed with two vendor estimates for all items
☐	Photos included for any item \$100 or over
☐	Start-up costs section completed with written justification, if applicable
☐	Building modifications section completed with two itemized estimates, if applicable
☐	Application can be emailed to DHHS.ChildCareGrants@Nebraska.gov or mailed to: DHHS – Child Care Grants P.O. Box 95026 Lincoln, NE 68509-5026