

United Way of  
Northeastern MN



## COMMUNITY INVESTMENT SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS Child Care Expansion Pilot Program

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In 2013, United Way of Northeastern Minnesota (UWNEMN) conducted a needs assessment through Wilder Research to determine the needs and issues regarding child care in the region from parent, provider and employer perspectives. The assessment focused specifically on how families find and use child care, identified child care challenges and needs, and explored early education options offered by our providers. Finally, the report demonstrated how UWNEMN could address the emerging issues surrounding local child care on the Iron Range.

The results showed that finding a child care arrangement that has all the features that are important is either “very hard” or “somewhat hard” for the majority of families surveyed. Families indicated that the lack of flexible scheduling and lack of quality child care as their top difficulties. An alarming 50% of surveyed families stated the lack of child care affects their decision to continue living in Upper St. Louis or Itasca County. The lack of child care is affecting the decision to have children in 31% of families surveyed. In addition, 37% of families stated the lack of child care affects their decision to have *additional* children.

Barriers to finding child care included waiting lists as long as one year, sometimes longer, especially for infant care, flexible scheduling to accommodate shift work as the hours worked by mining employees and other industries on the Iron Range such as healthcare are nontraditional, and not enough formal early education options.

Child care providers expressed concerns in meeting parents’ needs due to space limitations within their facilities or homes. Also, offering early childhood education has barriers for providers, as trainings to become “accredited” or “rated” are expensive and time intensive with most trainings held outside of the Iron Range area. In addition, finding additional dollars for updated equipment, learning toys, curriculum and educational materials is also a burden.

UWNEMN’s main priority is increasing the availability of child care on the Iron Range. We are currently piloting a child care expansion that allows for new and currently operating licensed providers to apply for funding to expand capacity. Financial partners in this project include the Northland Foundation, St. Louis County and the Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Board.

## FUNDING CRITERIA

### I. Provider Funding Eligibility

- Must be a licensed child care provider which includes: center, home, faith or employer based facilities located within the UWNEMN Iron Range service territory. Communities include: *Alborn, Angora, Aurora, Babbitt, Biwabik, Brimson, Britt, Buhl, Canyon, Cherry, Chisholm, Cook, Cotton, Crane Lake, Culver, Ely, Embarrass, Eveleth, Floodwood, Forbes, Gheen, Gilbert, Hibbing, Hoyt Lakes, Iron, Keewatin, Kelly Lake, Kinney, Makinen, Markham, Mt. Iron, Nashwauk, Orr, Palo, Pengilly, Saginaw, Side Lake, Soudan, Tower, Virginia and Zim*)
- Expansion of infant care is priority, however providers are allowed to request funding to expand classroom size for other age groups and children with special needs.
- Provider must be Parent Aware rated or currently signed on and in the process of completing at least a one star rating. **Documentation of rating or current commitment must be included with grant proposal**
- Additional preference is given to providers that offer extended hours and flexible hours to accommodate families with shift work.
- Grant recipients will be required to provide active licensed child care services in Minnesota for a minimum of 5 years from the date of the award letter. If for any reason the program ceases to provide active child care services within the required timeframe, you will be required to repay grant dollars on a prorated basis

### II. Grant Items Eligible for Funding

- Construction and capital improvements to allow for additional children to be served within the child care site. Work must be completed by a licensed and bonded contractor.
  - i. **Rule 3 family child care providers are not allowed to apply for major renovations or additions to the home unless it is flagged by licensing as a need for health and safety requirements such as an egress window, repairing steps, installing railing or gates etc.**
- Items that will support a stimulating early learning environment and school readiness.  
*Examples of these include:*
  - i. Learning toys
  - ii. Literacy materials and activities
  - iii. Creative equipment
  - iv. Experiential Learning Centers
  - v. Curriculum to support early learning
- Items that will support the physical health and well-being of additional children served.  
*Examples of these include:*
  - i. Cribs and mattresses that meet safety standards
  - ii. Cots, mats and linens for sleeping
  - iii. Highchairs that meet safety standards
  - iv. Changing tables
  - v. Safety gates
  - vi. Appliance and cabinet locks
  - vii. Electrical outlet covers
  - viii. Fireplace, heater and wood-burning stove covers
  - ix. Lead content detectors
  - x. Radon detectors
  - xi. Smoke and carbon monoxide alarms
  - xii. Outdoor play equipment that meets safety standards
  - xiii. Playground safety surfacing

## APPLICATION CHECKLIST – NEW CHILD CARE BUSINESSES

- Business Plan and Cash Flow Projection
- Application with all questions completed
- A copy of your child care license
- A copy of your Parent Aware rating *or* a copy of your signed agreement proving your scheduled date of completion.
- Project Budget: Include all confirmed and pending funding sources
- An itemized list of requested re-imbursements. Include copies of estimates and bids for fences, windows or construction projects. This may be a bid from a contractor or a materials list from a home improvement store if you are completing any work yourself
- If applicable, please provide copy of contractor's license

### Additional Items to consider attaching

- Pictures from a catalog or the internet, especially for unique or expensive items that might be questioned by the review committee.

## APPLICATION CHECKLIST – EXISTING CHILD CARE BUSINESSES

- Application with all questions completed
- A copy of your child care license
- A copy of your Parent Aware rating *or* a copy of your signed agreement proving your scheduled date of completion.
- Project Budget including all confirmed and pending funding sources
- Estimates and bids: This is required for fences, windows or construction projects. This may be a bid from a contractor or a materials list from a home improvement store if you are completing any work yourself
- If applicable, please provide copy of contractor's license

### Additional Items to consider attaching

- Pictures from a catalog or the internet, especially for unique or expensive items that might be questioned by the review committee.