

Big Stone County Family Services 2025 Child Care Provider Grant Guidelines

To address the critical shortage of childcare in Big Stone County, grant monies are being offered to new childcare providers. The grant program will assist Childcare providers, who are soon-to-be licensed, with expenses related to purchasing new items, making improvements that are required to meet licensing standards, or are critical to the start-up of their business. Childcare providers include Family Child Care programs and Child Care Centers as licensed according to Minnesota's Human Services Licensing Act (MN Statute 245A and MN Rules 9502/9503). Applications for the 2025 grant period can be made from January 1, 2025, to December 31, 2025.

Eligible Applicants

Any soon to be licensed childcare provider located in Big Stone County serving children ranging in age from 6 weeks to 11 years old.

Eligible Activities

Childcare providers may apply for funds to support the start-up of childcare services. Examples of eligible expenses are listed on pages four and five.

These grants can be used to cover the cost of materials for outdoor play area fencing or other minor construction projects as required by licensing to ensure child safety or meet other program standards. All materials must be new and must be purchased from a retail store, not a private party. The grant may cover material and labor costs.

In addition, these grants can be used for technology and software to create, enhance, and maintain business management systems. This includes costs associated with accessing the internet, such as installation or equipment, and website costs for start-up. *Ongoing subscription fees, monthly payments, and maintenance are not eligible.*

In addition, grants are not allowed to be spent on items considered to be part of the cost of doing business, including but not limited to:

- Accounting and legal fees
- Advertising
- Monthly/annual subscription fees for websites, internet, software, etc.
- Banking service charges
- Cleaning
- Food
- Insurance
- Licenses
- Taxes
- Rent or mortgage
- Salaries
- Transportation
- Utilities

Grant Guidelines – New Childcare Programs

Start-up grants will be awarded on a first come – first serve basis as allocations allow. Childcare providers eligible for the 2025 Start-Up Grant may receive only one grant award.

Funds for new childcare providers will be setup as a deferred loan. The loan will be forgiven once the childcare provider is fully licensed and operational for 36 months for a family childcare provider and 60 months for a childcare center. If a new childcare provider fails to become licensed or open for operation, the funds shall be repaid to the Child Care Provider Grant Program. If for any reason, a new childcare provider ceases to provide childcare services prior to the deferred loan forgiveness date, the childcare provider will be required to repay grant dollars on a prorated basis.

The maximum grant award for Family Childcare programs is \$20,000. The maximum grant award for Child Care Centers is \$25,000.

After approval of the grant application, funds will be paid on a reimbursement basis. Childcare providers will be required to present receipts/documentation of the expenses prior to receiving reimbursement. Funding will be available on an ongoing basis, subject to availability of funds.

Grant Application Review Process

Once the application is submitted, it will be reviewed by a two-person committee. The committee will consist of the Family Services Director and one other Family Services staff member. Each application will be reviewed and approved based on the guidelines offered in this notice and availability of funds. Approval or denial of the grant will be made in writing for every application.

Submitting Your Application

You may fill out the attached application in ink, using more paper if needed. A fillable copy of this application will be available on the County website, under Family Services/Licensing. Review the checklist below for required supporting documentation. The application should be neat, easy to read and stapled together in order. Be sure to complete all questions on the application, incomplete applications will not be considered.

1. Submit the application form and required attachments to the address below.
2. Keep one copy of the guidelines and one of your completed application form, along with all required attachments for your records. You will need to refer to your application if you are awarded a grant.

Mail or email the original completed application packet to:

Big Stone County Family Services
340 2nd Street NW
Ortonville MN 56278

Amy.weir@bigstonecounty.gov

Your application packet must include:

- The application form with all questions completed.
- Copy of your current childcare license, if applicable. Also include any documentation from your licensor if the items in your grant application are needed to meet licensing requirements.
- Building permit (*if applicable*). If your project requires a building permit, please attach.
- Estimate or bid (*if applicable*). This is required for the installation of fences, windows, or construction, as required by licensing, or equipment assembly projects. This bid must be from a licensed and bonded contractor.
- Pictures (*if applicable*). A picture from a catalog or online is recommended.
- W-9 Form.

By applying for the grant, I agree to be bound by the provisions set forth in the Big Stone County Family Services 2025 Child Care Provider Grant Guidelines.

Applicant Signature

Date

Eligible Expenses (This is not an exhaustive list of eligible items but provides some guidance to childcare providers on the type of expenses typically eligible for the grant funds.)

Household alarms and detectors		Transportation safety	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smoke alarms • Carbon monoxide alarms • Radon detectors • Lead content detectors (for toys and other child items which could be put in the mouth) • Items required by Fire Marshal or Licensing regulations 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate child restraint systems for the ages of the children in care • Safety helmets for children riding bicycles or tricycles • Strollers that meet safety specifications • Double/multiple kid strollers 	
Household Safety		Child safety	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire extinguishers • Choke tubes (for gauging choking potential of small objects) • Disaster kits • Fireplace, heater and wood-burning stove screen covers • Safety latches or locks for doors and cabinets • Safety gates • Appliance locks • First aid items 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electrical outlet covers • Refrigerator thermometer • Hot liquids thermometer • Window blind and curtain cord tension or tie-down devices • Air purifiers, humidifiers, dehumidifiers • Light fixtures containing shielded or shatterproof bulb 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cribs, mattresses that meet safety standards • Cots, mats and linens for sleeping • Highchairs that meet safety standards • Changing tables • Shock-absorbent or loose material such as sand under outdoor climbing equipment • Outdoor play equipment that meets safety standards • Audio/visual monitoring equipment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Playground safety surfacing • Large outdoor umbrella • Sandbox covers • Infant bucket swings for outdoor playground swing sets • Swings with soft or flexible seats • Fencing • Replacement of wooden barriers that contain creosote or arsenic • Guardrails on stairs

Facilities and operations			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Egress windows • Lead-free environment • Facility improvements such as repairing steps, installing railing if flagged by licensing • Gates • Training costs 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Antibacterial wall dispensers • Secured garbage cans and wastebaskets, hands-free covered waste disposal cans • Computer and software for financial management and other necessary functions of business. • Printer 	
Room equipment and furniture		Active Play	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tables • Chairs • Coat, cubby units • Storage units • Centers (book, listening, writing) • Computer table 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cots or mats • Classroom activity carpets • Activity mats and gyms • Classroom displays 	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bicycles, Tricycles, • Wagons • Scooters, scooter boards • Balance beams • Tumbling mats • Play tunnels or hoops • Basketball hoops, balls • Sensory items 	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Playground equipment (climbers, swing sets, slides) • Large unit blocks • Rocking boats • Parachutes • Large motor games (such as bean bag, ring toss) • STEM materials 	