

# Burlington Early Learning Initiative: 2021 Capacity Grant Application

## Purpose

The 2021 ELI grants will fund projects that increase the availability of high-quality infant and toddler child care slots by 2023 for children from Burlington families of all income levels. **The application process will open July 7, 2021.** Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis until all funds are expended. About \$50,000 in total grant funds will be available.

The City of Burlington's Economic Recovery Team is leading Mayor Miro Weinberger's *Early Learning Initiative (ELI)*, an effort to increase access to high-quality child care for low income Burlington children through the provision of scholarships and the creation of additional spots in high-quality childcare programs in Burlington for children from birth to three years old. This grant application is a component of that effort and specifically focused on providing targeted funds to increase the number of infant and toddler child care slots available in the City of Burlington. This is the fourth year of the capacity grant program, with funding allocated in the first three years expected to create a total of 92 new slots.

## Grant Items Eligible for Funding

- Construction and capital improvements to public or commercial buildings to allow for additional infant and toddler care within the child care site. Family child care homes are not eligible to apply for major renovations or additions unless *flagged by child care licensing* as a need to meet health and safety requirements to serve infants and toddlers (i.e., egress for exit or stairway, or changes related to supervision improvements).
- Specific program quality improvement efforts that will enable a home-based or Center-based provider to achieve 4 or 5 stars or have a clear plan to achieve at least 4 stars within 12 months.
- Programmatic changes/improvements to increase total number of infant and toddlers served at the program.
- Other expenses, including for example training, certification, or licensing costs, that directly result in the potential to increase the number of infant and toddler slots in Burlington.

## Who Can Apply

- Organizations or agencies that currently operate or plan to operate a licensed child care program within the city of Burlington
- Currently registered family child care programs planning to expand to a licensed program within the city of Burlington
- Individuals planning to open a registered family child care home in the City of Burlington or considering licensing a registered family child care home in the City of Burlington.

## Proposal Eligibility Requirements

1. Proposed projects must be located in Burlington.
2. Applicants must serve or plan to serve children ages birth to three.

3. Applicants must be high-quality programs (defined by 4 or 5 stars in Vermont's STep Ahead Recognition System [STARS]) or have a clear plan to become high-quality (achieve at least 4 stars) within 12 months.
4. Applicants must enroll or plan to enroll children who receive funding through the Child Care Financial Assistance Program (CCFAP) in newly created child care slots at a threshold of at least 20 percent. Applicants for sustainable planning grants intended to preserve existing spaces or services do not need to be enrolled in CCFAP, but must be willing to assess whether such funding could benefit the program; sustainable planning grant funding can be used to establish CCFAP access as well. Let's Grow Kids (LGK) will provide technical assistance related to CCFAP.
5. Applicants must have or plan to obtain Specialized Child Care status.
6. Applicants must have or plan to have an employee compensation package that meets the [Burlington Livable Wage Ordinance](#).

## Grant Amounts

Applicants may apply for funds at the following levels:

- Licensed Center Based Early Childhood Programs may apply for up to \$50,000, though please note that is the total amount expected to be available in 2021 for all applicants.
- Registered/Licensed Family Child Care Homes may apply for up to \$15,000.

Funding at higher levels than outlined above may be considered for exceptional project proposals as identified during consultation process between LGK and prospective applicant. LGK will bring recommendations for higher funding to the grant review committee for final recommendations to the Mayor. The grant process is competitive, and applications will be evaluated based on established scoring criteria.

## Application Deadline:

**Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis** until all funds are expended.

## Application Sections

Each Application must include **all seven** of the sections described below:

**1. Application Form:** This section will include demographic and programmatic information.

**2. Community Impact Statement:** This section should indicate how the program would support the community. Indicate the number infants, toddlers, preschoolers and school children the program will serve. Describe how the program will contribute to increased capacity of high quality enrollment slots for infants and toddlers in Burlington and, specifically, the number of new infant toddler enrollment slots that will be created as a result of this grant funding. Include a plan for inclusion of children eligible for funding through the Child Care Financial Assistance Program (CCFAP) as well as those eligible for Specialized Child Care. The proposal should also explain how partnerships are or will be formed with other organizations in the community. We recommend this section not exceed 250 words.

**3. Leadership and Personnel:** This section should indicate the qualifications and relevant experiences of the project leader and any key personnel who will be involved in the development and implementation of the proposed project. Please describe demonstrated skills and experiences that will contribute to successful project implementation including number of years in the field, current or past roles, and relevant credentials. This section should not exceed 250 words.

**4. Program Quality:** This section should describe program quality related to the current program (if applicable) and/or the planned program. For already established programs, please describe your current status within Vermont's STep Ahead Recognition System (STARS), your accreditation through the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) or the National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC), as well as your Vermont Act 166 pre-K partnerships. Indicate plans to implement, maintain or improve quality and excellence in the program this grant funding will support. This section should not exceed 250 words.

**5. Business Plan:** Applicants are required to provide a projected cash flow spreadsheet (using the sample template provided or a similar format) and a narrative explaining the form. The plan should include projected expenses and income for the next 12 months. The narrative should describe program expenses including wages, food, supplies, facility maintenance and income from fees, CACFP (if applicable), CCFAP and any other sources of income. Indicate how you will address the Burlington Livable Wage Ordinance. Describe how your plan supports the inclusion of at least 20 percent of children receiving CCFAP. The business plan narrative should not exceed 250 words.

**6. Budget:** Applicants are required to complete the budget form and provide a brief narrative explaining the form.

#### **7. Required Attachments:**

- Current résumé(s) of key project lead/personnel
- Tax identification verification number (EIN/TIN/I-9)
- Project budget spreadsheet (template provided)
- Cash flow projection spreadsheet (sample template provided)
- For currently existing programs: Prior year financials (audited if possible) or prior year tax returns, year-to-date budget and actuals
- Additional financial documents may be requested during the application or review process

#### **Selection Process**

- The selection process will be the responsibility of a Grant Committee that will make recommendations to the Mayor of Burlington. The Mayor will review and present a slate of recommended finalists to the Burlington City Council for approval.
- Incomplete proposals will not be considered for funding.
- Applications that do not meet the grant eligibility requirements will not be considered for funding.

#### **Notification**

Applicants should expect to be contacted with a timeline for review after application is received and may be asked to attend a City Council meeting should they be selected prior to the Council vote authorizing the grants.

## **Acceptance**

Upon notification of grant awards, applicants must sign a Contract Agreement prior to receiving funds.

## **Ongoing Consultation and Technical Assistance**

Grant applicants will be expected to participate in ongoing consultation with LGK prior to submitting a grant application and periodically throughout the cycle of the grant.

## **Reporting Procedures**

*Required Reporting:* Grantees will be required to complete a mid-year progress report and a final report at the end of the grant period. These reports will document how grant funds have been used, any accomplishments and challenges, and next steps. These reports will include the total spaces (disaggregated by age of children, children receiving CCFAP, specialized care). The report will also note any screenings that were completed (developmental or other), any special services that children received and how weekly meals were provided through a food program (CACFP). For evaluation, LGK will aggregate this information and provide cumulative results in its evaluation report. The evaluation report will compare the baseline (grant application) with the progress and final reports.

*Qualitative interviews:* In order to describe the capacity building process and document the accomplishments and challenges experienced by grantees, LGK will interview each of the grantees at the end of the grant period. The aggregated interviews will be used to develop a model for capacity building grant-making that can be applied in Burlington as well as statewide.

## **Contact Information**

Contact Rebecca Reese to inquire about the application process.

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