



Implementation Manual

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Child Care Wayfinder Overview



Background

Child Care Wayfinder is a one-stop navigation network for starting and growing child care programs. The network is staffed by local navigators at regional Child Care Aware of Minnesota agencies and Minnesota Tribal Resources for Early Childhood Care (MNTRECC). Navigators help people in their communities create, sustain, and expand licensed family child care and center-based programs by offering encouragement, support, and connection to the many resources available for child care programs.

History

The 2021 Minnesota Legislature mandated the creation of Child Care Wayfinder, then referred to as a one-stop assistance network for child care, by directing the Minnesota Department of Human Services (now the Department of Children, Youth, and Families) to use funds from the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 to establish the network. The Child Care One-Stop Regional Assistance Network Plan is available on the Legislative Reference Library's website. The Child Care Aware of Minnesota system was charged with implementing Child Care Wayfinder.

The 2023 Legislature established Wayfinder as a permanent program within the Child Care Aware system under Sec. 142E.31 MN Statutes, Subdivision 5(9).

Equity Analysis and Commitment

Equity Analysis

Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) families are more likely to be experiencing barriers to child care. Wayfinder recognizes this inequity in child care access and is designed to provide specialized outreach and services to increase access to child care that is culturally relevant and responsive. Wayfinder also recognizes that goals may vary across racial and ethnic communities and that engagement is critical to ensuring services are delivered in a way that meets the needs of all racial and ethnic groups in Minnesota.

The barriers unique to BIPOC and non-English speaking individuals to start licensed child care programs require strategies designed to address those barriers. The following elements of Wayfinder services will ensure barriers are addressed:

- Wayfinder Navigators and financial incentives will be strategically targeted to ensure child care needs are met for BIPOC families.
- Materials for outreach and licensing supports will be culturally relevant and available in more languages than just English.
- Wayfinder Navigators and child care licensors will collaborate to help bridge understanding of requirements across cultural differences.

Equity Statement

Child Care Aware of Minnesota (CCAoMN) and Child Care Wayfinder are committed to cultivating an inclusive system that encompasses and promotes greater interaction and understanding between people from diverse backgrounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity, race, gender, language, age, sexual orientation, religion, disability, and experience. CCAoMN is committed to advancing diversity and equity within the child care field. Our organization values inclusivity and actively promotes diverse participation by its Board of Directors and staff, which is representative of the communities we serve. CCAoMN recognizes our talented and diverse workforce as a key competitive advantage and represents the children and families it serves. CCAoMN will not tolerate any unlawful discrimination, and any such conduct is prohibited.

Other Capacity-Building Initiatives

Child Care Wayfinder is one of several child care capacity building initiatives addressing the need for increased access to child care for families in Minnesota. This section describes other capacity building initiatives, including statewide, regional, and local initiatives.

Statewide Capacity-Building Initiatives

The 2021 Minnesota Legislature passed into law the following statewide capacity-building initiatives:

Business Training and Consultation

- \$3 million to help child care providers build, strengthen, and acquire business skills
- By First Children's Finance

Child Care Facility Revitalization Grants

- \$22.5 million for child care providers for facility improvements, minor renovations, and related equipment and services, including assistance meeting licensing requirements needed to establish, maintain, or expand licensed and legal unlicensed child care and early childhood education sites.
- By First Children's Finance

Shared Services Innovation Grants

- \$200,000 to test strategies by which licensed family child care providers may share services and thereby achieve economies of scale.
- Grantee #1 Lakes & Prairies Community Action Partnership
- Grantee #2 WomenVenture

Child Care Alternate Licensing Model Project

- \$100,000 to explore alternative child care licensing models to address provider needs.
- A report must be submitted to the Legislature by January 1, 2023.
- By Minnesota Department of Human Services, Office of Inspector General

Child Care Center and Family Child Care Regulation Modernization project

- \$3.78 million to revise licensing standards, implement a risk based violation system, and employing key indicators for abbreviated inspections for Family Child Care and Child Care Centers.
- A report and proposed legislation must be submitted to Legislature by February 1, 2024
- By Minnesota Department of Human Services, Office of Inspector General

Great Start for All Minnesota Children Task Force

- \$858,000 for establishing the Great Start for All Minnesota Children Task Force to explore early childhood education system solutions.
- By Minnesota Management and Budget

Child Care Economic Development Grants

- \$6.5 million for establishing base funding for grants to local communities to increase the number of quality child care providers to support economic development.
- By Minnesota Department of Economic Development

Child Care Stabilization Grants

- \$3.4 million to provide child care providers with payments to help stabilize the child care market including funds for increased salary and benefits
- By Department of Children, Youth, and Families, Child Care Services

Family, Friend, and Neighbor Support

- \$1.5 million for grants to community-based organizations working with family, friend, and neighbor caregivers
- By Department of Children, Youth, and Families, Child Care Services

Minnesota Initiative Foundation (MIF) Grants

- \$4 million to establish annual base funding for the Minnesota Initiative Foundations to facilitate planning for rural communities in establishing action plans to increase and sustain the supply of quality child care in the region, engage the private sector to invest local resources in quality child care, provide training, and recruit providers for participation in quality rating and improvement programs.
- By Minnesota Initiative Foundations

Local Capacity Building Initiatives

In addition to the statewide capacity building initiatives described above, several counties, cities, and local agencies have created capacity building initiatives as well. Information about these local initiatives will be included in future versions of this manual.



Roles and Responsibilities

Child Care Wayfinder Roles

Regional Agencies

Child Care Startup and Retention Navigator

- Provides encouragement, support, and connection to resources required for initial licensing as well as resources needed for sustaining or expanding currently licensed child care programs.
- Coordinates and implements outreach strategies to recruit new child care providers.
- Collaborates with community organizations to build the supply of high quality child care.

Coordinator/Supervisor

- Provides supervision to Navigators
- Ensures Wayfinder services are provided

Minnesota Tribal Resources for Early Care and Education

MNTRECC Child Care Startup and Retention Navigator/Outreach

- Provides encouragement, support, and connection to resources required for initial licensing as well as resources needed for sustaining or expanding currently licensed child care programs.
- Coordinates and implements outreach strategies to recruit new child care providers.
- Collaborates with community and tribal organizations to build the supply of high quality child care.

Coordinator/Supervisor

- Provides supervision to Navigators
- Ensures Wayfinder services are provided

Coordinating Office

Child Care Navigator Network Coordinator

- Provides technical assistance and guidance to Child Care Startup and Retention Navigators

- Provides direct support to users of the Child Care Wayfinder website
- Connects Wayfinder participants who inquire via phone or website to local Startup and Retention Navigators

Child Care Capacity Building Manager

- Coordinates the statewide implementation of Child Care Wayfinder
- Tracks successes, challenges, and barriers incurred throughout the Wayfinder process including evaluation of the Wayfinder initiative
- Facilitates collaboration around capacity building across regions
- Establishes and maintains partnerships with other organizations working on capacity building initiatives

Child Care Aware Capacity-Building Roles

Child Care Aware District Agencies

Workforce Advisor

- Provide advising to individuals seeking careers in the child care field with a focus on economically challenged individuals or geographic locations.
- Services provided include: wrap around services and supports, career skills training and career placement, mentor/mentee opportunities, and career and education advising supports.

Grant Administrator

- Work with Startup and Retention Navigators regarding the spending and purchasing of Wayfinder startup vouchers.
- Ensure materials requested are ordered, delivered, and the cost is paid or reimbursed.
- Maintain financial records and track grant spending.

Child Care Aware Coordinating Office

Workforce Development Advising Coordinator

- Provides Workforce Advisors with connections to Child Care Wayfinder, licensing, and institutions of higher education.
- Collects data regarding success and challenges of Workforce Advising and evaluates the Workforce Development initiative.

Workforce Development Coordinator

- Coordinates the statewide implementation of Empower to Educate providing guidance and direction to those working at the district level in a Workforce Advisor role.
- The Workforce Advising Coordinator may help district staff navigate challenging questions, get started in their role, host state-wide meetings, as well as serve individuals who contact Empower to Educate.

T.E.A.C.H. Counselor Coordinator

- Coordinate all T.E.A.C.H. Scholarship services to program recipients.
- Provide technical assistance to T.E.A.C.H. Scholarship recipients.
- Serve as a liaison between the T.E.A.C.H. Program and key partners.

T.E.A.C.H. Manager

- Lead outreach initiatives and strategies to form partnerships, recruit participants and increase the use of Financial Supports programs.
- Provide technical assistance regarding the TEACH process to centers, providers, and college personnel.

Supports Coordinator - REETAIN

- Coordinate the administration of the REETAIN grant program.
- Provide technical assistance to REETAIN grant recipients.

Child Care Information Services Specialist

- Provides phone consultation and referral to families seeking child care services.
- Provides technical assistance to online users of the Parent Aware search tool.
- Collaborates with the Language Access Line.
- Conducts Provider Rate Survey and Business Update Survey.

Child Care Information Services Engagement Coordinator

- Collaborates and builds strong relationships with families, communities, and intermediaries across Minnesota.
- Provides additional engagement to families identified as hard to reach and hard to serve populations for full wrap around support.

Child Care Information Services Outreach Coordinator

- Identifies and provide outreach to programs serving families, particularly those who are hard to reach.
- Attends outreach events to promote Child Care Aware services.
- Builds and maintains relationships with key partners.

Resource Partner & Stakeholder Roles

Child Care Aware – Regional Agencies

Parent Aware Quality Coach

- Provide Relationship-Based Professional Develop Coaching and/or Technical Assistance to Parent Aware participants.
- Support all Parent Aware participants through various pathways to obtain a Parent Aware rating.

Parent Aware CLASS® Coach

- Certified in the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) Tool.
- Coach child care center staff on the CLASS tool.

Child Care Aware – District Agencies

Grant Administrator

- Review and approve grant spending by child care programs receiving child care Regional, Startup, or Emergency grants through Child Care Aware of Minnesota.
- Work with Professional Development Advisors and Quality Coaches regarding the spending and purchasing of Parent Aware Grants.
- Ensure materials requested are ordered, delivered, and the cost is paid or reimbursed.
- Maintain financial records and track grant spending.

Parent Aware Recruiter

- Create and implement recruitment plans to increase participation in Parent Aware.
- Recruit child care centers and family child care programs to join or re-rate in Parent Aware.

Professional Development Advisor

- Assist in Individual Membership process in Develop along with Organization Profile registration and Classroom tab setup.
- Review individual Learning Records in Develop to determine training needs for Parent Aware rating.
- Assist in creation of individual and program-wide professional development plans.

- Advise individuals in pursuing their professional development career path.

Professional Development Plan Staff

- Recruit, retain, and develop relationships with individuals who train on behalf of Child Care Aware of Minnesota.
- Ensure their local counties have the trainings needed and are documented in Develop.
- Oversee contracts with trainers and venues.
- Coordinate tailored training for the workforce.

Professional Development Support Staff

- Manage the day-to-day needs of scheduled trainings.
- Provide customer support and help participants walk through Develop instructions such as creating an Individual Profile and registering for classes.
- Enter events into Develop, including participant attendance once completed.

Child Care Aware – Coordinating Office

Communications Director

- Create statewide marketing plans and coordinate marketing campaigns.
- Coordinate the creation and delivery of statewide and local marketing materials.

Communications Coordinator

- Provide support in the development of statewide and local marketing materials.

Director of Equity and Inclusion

- Coordinates diversity, equity, inclusion and anti-racism strategies, initiatives, work plans and activities.
- Creates learning and development activities and opportunities for staff to advance their understanding of issues of diversity, equity inclusion and anti-racisms.

Quality Improvement Coordinator and Manager

- Provide support and technical assistance to the Parent Aware Recruiters, Quality Coaches and CLASS® Coaches.
- Provide support and technical assistance to accredited programs seeking a Rating through the Accelerated Pathway and programs using the Expedited Pathway, and those that have earned an Accelerated or Expedited Pathway grant.
- Gather input from the Child Care Aware system and make recommendations for Parent Aware policies and implementation.

Department of Children, Youth, and Families

Child Care Services

One-Stop Assistance Network Specialist

- Provide state-level leadership to support, plan and coordinate the Child Care One Stop Assistance Network known as Child Care Wayfinder.

Child Care Capacity Building Specialist

- Provide state-level leadership and coordination for several initiatives that support strategies to address child care supply in Minnesota including child care workforce.

Department of Human Services Office of Inspector General, Licensing Division

Child Care Center Licensing (State)

- Receive and review licensing applications.
- Conduct licensing visits prior to licensure and maintain ongoing compliance to Rule 3 after licensing.

Family Child Care Licensing (County)

- Receive and review licensing applications.
- Conduct licensing visits prior to licensure and maintain ongoing compliance to Rule 2 after licensing.

Department of Employment and Economic Development

Economic Development Consultants

- Provides economic development consultation and support including answering questions ranging from basic process questions to addressing far more complex regulatory, financial, managerial, business structure and other questions.
- E.g. What form do you need to file, where do you get necessary forms, and with whom do you file it the form?

MN Office of the Ombuds for Family Child Care

Family Child Care Ombudsperson

- Advocates on behalf of family child care providers to address all areas of concern related licensing, compliance, and other issues facing family child care providers.

First Children's Finance

Business Development Specialists

- Provides business and financial planning, consultation, training and support to early care and education providers.

Minnesota Initiative Foundations (MIF)

Early Childhood Initiative

- Coordinates community support and provides opportunities for training, incentives, loans, and grants to early childhood programs in support of quality accessible and affordable child care.

Center for Inclusive Child Care (CICC)

Health and Safety Specialist

- Provide coaching on supporting health and safety best practices in family and center-based care settings.

Infant/Toddler Specialist

- Provide coaching on infant/toddler development and providing quality care in group settings, both in family and center-based care.

Inclusion Coach

- Provide coaching to family or center-based programs on successful inclusion of children with special needs/challenging behaviors throughout environmental, programming and relational strategies.
- Differences from Mental Health Consultants
 - Support child care programs and providers in doing their work to assist children through hands on modeling.
 - Get permission from families when working with individual children.
 - Suggest program speak with Quality Coach if issues are outside of the scope of the Inclusion Coaches, such as mental health issues.

Department of Human Services Behavioral Health Division

Mental Health Consultant

- Offer a combination of training, reflective consultation, skill building, and clinical intervention for child care staff, supervisors, and directors of family and center-based care settings.
- Differences from Inclusion Coaches
 - A mental health prevention service.

- Focused on building adult capacity to support infant and young children's emotional development and to prevent, identify, or reduce mental health challenges (Zero to Three, 2017).
- Consultation includes a combination of training, supported skill building, and reflective consultation - active listening, exploration of the teacher's attitudes and beliefs about situations, and problem solving.



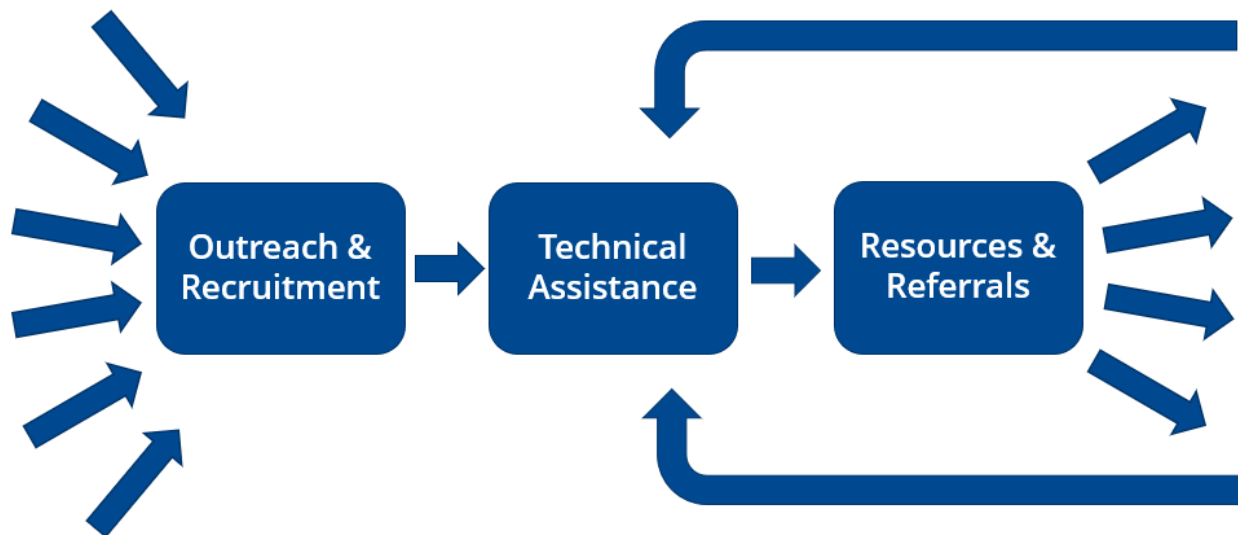
Capacity Building Strategies

Summary of Core Job Functions

Navigators have four core job functions, which correspond to Wayfinder’s capacity building strategies:

- Outreach and recruitment
- Technical assistance
- Resources and referrals
- Documenting successes and challenges

The relationship between these four core job functions is summarized by the graphic below:



Outreach and Recruitment

In the outreach and recruitment function of their job, Navigators find individuals and organizations to participate in the Wayfinder program. The arrows on the left side of the diagram represent the many possible pathways by which Wayfinder participants might arrive. Navigators recruit people who want to start child care programs as well as people operating already licensed programs. These arrows also represent the multiple methods of creative outreach and recruitment strategies needed.

To reach Wayfinder’s overall goal of increasing access to child care statewide, a necessary step is targeted outreach and recruitment, which ensures Navigators are focusing their work on maintaining and increasing child care capacity in communities with the lowest access.

Technical Assistance

In the technical assistance function of their job, Navigators accompany Wayfinder participants through the process of starting, sustaining, or expanding a licensed child care program. They provide an initial assessment of participants’ business and program needs, and then they assist participants in accessing the many resources available through partner organizations and services. The arrows connecting outreach and recruitment to technical assistance and technical assistance to resources and referrals in the diagram above represent the way that participants move through the Wayfinder process.

Navigators also assist participants in bringing together and putting to use all the support they receive as they move through the many steps and complex processes required to start, sustain, or expand a child care program. The arrows returning to technical assistance from the right side of the diagram represent the pathway from resource partners back to Navigators, who accompany participants through the entire process.

Resources and Referrals

In the resources and referrals function of their job, Navigators connect Wayfinder participants to the resources available through our resource partners. Navigators act as resource guides, as knowledgeable hubs of connection. The four arrows pointing from resources and referrals to the right represent the personal, collaborative relationships that Navigators maintain with staff at resource partner organizations. These relationships and the personal introductions they make possible provide an easier path for participants to follow in accessing resources.

Documenting Successes and Challenges

In the documenting successes and challenges function of their job, Navigators document each participants’ experience of the process of starting, sustaining, or expanding their child care program, paying special attention to what is working well—the successes—and what is not working well—the challenges. This job function takes place throughout the entire process represented in the diagram above.

By documenting successes, Navigators are creating resources to share with other Navigators, with participants, and with partners. For example, success with an innovative program model could be shared with all to encourage broader adoption of this model.

By documenting challenges, Navigators are collecting information about the many barriers and obstacles hindering communities' efforts to increase child care capacity, which will be used to advocate for systems level change that could reduce or remove those barriers.

Documenting successes and challenges also provides a way for Wayfinder to evaluate its effectiveness and make changes to refine and improve services.

Outreach and Recruitment

Outreach and recruitment is a capacity building strategy that will help Navigators find individuals and organizations interested in starting, sustaining, or expanding their child care programs. Navigators will create and maintain relationships within their communities to facilitate outreach and recruitment.

Outreach and recruitment efforts will be strategically targeted to focus on the geographic areas with lowest access, on BIPOC communities, and on the lack of capacity for infant and toddler care.

Navigators will determine the most effective outreach and recruitment methods for their service area. The following categories of outreach and recruitment activities illustrate some of the possibilities.

Statewide Marketing

- Statewide digital marketing campaign
 - Child Care Wayfinder Website
 - Digital ads

Local Outreach and Recruitment

- Provide marketing and outreach efforts based on local community needs including culture, language, and technology.
- Collect local information about individuals and organizations interested in starting licensed child care programs.
- Assess the success of outreach efforts and adjust marketing as needed.

Possible individuals to recruit

- New/expecting parents
- Staff at religious organizations
- Employers
- Early childhood educators with their own kids who need care
- Family, Friend, Neighbor (FFN) providers
- People whose parents worked in the field
- Parents with school age kids who have younger siblings
- Parents with young children

- Legally non-licensed providers (LNL)
- One income families that have several kids
- High school students
- Retirees
- Parents who are expecting that may be struggling to find care for themselves.

Recruitment Methods

Family-focused events and contacts relate to those serving families and children. These resources may be utilized to provide opportunities for Navigators to attend scheduled events for outreach as well as share marketing materials.

- Social Media - Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, including local “mom/dad or guardian groups,” and family events
- ECFE
- Local fairs, holiday celebrations, festivals, sporting events, and cultural events
- YMCA
- Children’s Museum
- Parks and Rec
- Library events

Business and Community Connections provide Navigators opportunity to create partnerships throughout the community including sharing knowledge of the importance of child care programing and how these businesses can aid in the child care access crisis. Navigators can provide marketing materials to businesses listed below, ask to attend departmental meetings, or outreach events.

- Information shared through community networks and partnerships
- Posting on social media – Facebook, Twitter, Instagram
- Organizations interested in establishing new child care programs
- Attending job fairs, workforce development agencies, DEED’s career force location
- Communities hoping to draw younger families to their towns
- Library
- Public Health
- Clinics
- Chamber of Commerce
- Community Action agencies
- Minnesota Initiative Foundations
- Police Department and Safety Organizations
- Faith-based Organizations
- Business and HR Department
- County Programs
- Neighborhood organizations
- Nonprofit organizations

Provider-focused opportunities allow Navigators to connect with currently licensed programs, or soon to be licensed, to offer ongoing support in their growth and development as well as encourage the use of Child Care Wayfinder services.

- Current child care providers needing retention support
- Current child care providers with the potential for expansion
- Current child care providers not needing services, but can support the mission of Child Care Wayfinder and offer referrals to colleagues in need
- Hosting Wayfinder outreach events (virtual or in-person)
- Participating in licensing orientations
- Students attending early childhood programs at local colleges
- Advocacy Groups
- Training events
- Provider appreciation events

Recruitment Collaboration

This list includes opportunity for additional agencies to provide referrals into Child Care Wayfinder.

- Child Care Aware System - Parent Aware Recruiters, Coaches, Professional Development Advisors, Workforce Advisors
- Family Child Care Licensors
- Child Care Center Licensors
- Providers
- Minnesota Initiative Foundations
- First Children's Finance

Technical Assistance

Providing technical assistance is a capacity building strategy that will ensure each Wayfinder participant has the support they need in moving through the process of starting, sustaining, or expanding their licensed child care program. The technical assistance that Navigators provide is closely related to another capacity building strategy: providing connections to resources through referrals to resource partners.

This section details the assistance types provided by Navigators as well as the phases, formats, and topics of that assistance.

Assistance Types

Navigators provide three types of assistance to Wayfinder participants:

- Assistance with starting a new child care program
- Assistance with sustaining a child care program operating at reduced capacity or risk of closure
- Assistance with expanding a child care program that has the potential to grow

The specific assistance needs will vary from program to program, but one important consideration is the type of program: family child care or child care center. A detailed description of program types is included in the Appendix.

Assistance with starting a new child care program

The process of starting a new licensed child care program is a complex process with many components, including obtaining a license, starting a business, securing funding, and developing an early childhood education program that meets the needs of families. These components are part of every program, but the specific startup assistance needs will be different depending on the type of program.

Wayfinder Navigators work with two types of programs:

- Family child care programs
- Child care centers

These two types of programs have different licensing processes, different business models, different funding requirements, and different program development tasks. Variation within the program type also leads to differences. Examples include

- When a family child care program is located within the home of a license holder, at another residential location, or in a commercial facility.
- When an organization is the license holder for a family child care program.
- When a child care center bases enrollment on a specific number of children and their ages.

Additionally, when beginning the process of starting a child care program, some Wayfinder participants will not yet know which program type is best for them and their community. When providing startup assistance, an important part of the inquiry and intake process described below is inviting participants to consider their program type options.

The specific path that a Wayfinder participant follows in starting a child care program will include a combination of direct assistance related to licensing, business development, funding, and program development as well as connection to additional resources through referrals to resource partners.

Assistance with sustaining a child care program

The process of sustaining a child care program is an ongoing process that every child care program must consider. Wayfinder's resource partners provide many forms of support that retain educators in the field and contribute to program sustainability. These include regular licensing visits by licensors to ensure that health and safety standards are being met, ongoing business support from business consultants to ensure business sustainability, grants to contribute to program improvements, professional development advising for educators and administrators, and quality improvement support for programs, including coaching through Parent Aware.

The retention assistance that Navigators provide is a supplement to this support. A sustainable program will likely already have strong connections to this network of resources. Navigators will focus their retention assistance on programs operating at reduced capacity or at risk of closure, assess their needs, and connect them with appropriate resources.

While retention assistance will vary widely based on program needs, these are some of the forms it could take:

- Assistance with challenges in children's behavior
- Assistance with issues in relationships with families
- Assistance with increasing enrollment
- Assistance with educator and administrator recruitment
- Assistance with educator and administrator retention

- Assistance with administrative support
- Assistance with computer and technology support
- Addressing patterns of licensing violation
- Assistance with relocating
- Assistance with retirement planning
- Reopening a program that has closed

Assistance with expanding a child care program

The process of expanding a child care program can take many forms. In some cases, it will be similar to starting a new program. In other cases, it may require only administrative changes.

- Increasing enrollment within licensed capacity, including adding school-age capacity
- Extending hours of operation
- Changing age group focus
- Adding or extending types of care, including drop-in care, sick care, summer programs
- Changing family child care license class
- Changing from a family child care license to a center license
- Adding physical space to the licensed program home/facility
- Adding additional locations

Assistance Phases

The technical assistance process has three phases, defined by creation and completion of a participation plan:

- Pre-Participation Plan Phase
- Participation Plan Phase
- Post-Participation Plan Phase

Pre-Participation Plan Phase

The pre-participation plan phase includes the time that Navigators spend recruiting potential participants or assisting participants prior to when they create a Participation Plan and sign a Wayfinder Participation Agreement.

The inquiry process is an important part of the Pre-Participation Plan Phase. It is a process that moves participants into the Participation Plan phase.

Initial Inquiry

Potential participants initiate their participation in Wayfinder through an initial inquiry, which can arrive through multiple channels. It is important for Navigators to be aware of the possible ways of receiving an inquiry to ensure a timely response while also allowing

flexibility in how potential participants contact Wayfinder. The following are common ways a Navigator might receive an inquiry:

In-person

- At an outreach event
- At a meeting arranged by a resource partner

Wayfinder website

- Filling out the contact form on the Wayfinder website to send a message to their local Navigator without filling out the Inquiry Questionnaire
- Filling out the contact form on the Wayfinder website to send a message to their local Navigator and filling out the Inquiry Questionnaire for their local Navigator
- Filling out the Inquiry Questionnaire for their local Navigator without filling out the contact form on the Wayfinder website
- Live chat on the Wayfinder website

Phone

- Calling their local Navigator using the Wayfinder 888 number and their local Navigator's extension, which is listed on the website
- Calling their local Navigator using their office or work cell phone number
- Calling the Wayfinder 888 number without a local Navigator's extension

Email

- Sending an email to their local Navigator
- Sending an email to Coordinating Office staff
- Sending an email to a resource partner or other colleague who forwards the email to their local Navigator

The initial inquiry may contain a general request for support. It may also contain a request for a specific piece of information. For example, the Financial Supports team at the Coordinating Office regularly receives requests for information about grants from those interested in starting child care programs. In both situations, the Navigator should respond by beginning an inquiry process.

Inquiry Process

The exact inquiry process will vary based on the channel through which the initial inquiry is received and the preferences of the local Navigator. The inquiry process may be conducted by Coordinating Office staff if requested by local Navigators.

The following steps illustrate the important elements that should be included in the inquiry process:

- 1) Gather the information already shared by the potential participant.

- Including any information shared in an email, voicemail, or through the Inquiry Questionnaire (which will appear in the temporary case management system)
- 2) Reply to the potential participant with a message that includes:
- The information they requested
 - An invitation to participate in Wayfinder
 - An offer to tell them more about the benefits of participating in Wayfinder
- 3) If the potential participant / participant accepts the invitation to participate in Wayfinder or to learn more, ask them to schedule a call or meeting for this purpose (an Inquiry Conversation) with a message that includes:
- Information about how to access the Inquiry Questionnaire and an invitation to fill it out.
 - NOTE: This information can also be collected during the conversation, so filling it out ahead of time is not necessary; however, it can be encouraged because having this information ahead of time can be helpful.
- 4) The Inquiry Conversation should include the following:
- Sharing an overview of the services provided by Navigators
 - Collecting information on the Inquiry Questionnaire that has not yet been collected.
 - NOTE: It could be helpful to bring a hard copy of the Inquiry Questionnaire to an in-person meeting or to share the Inquiry Questionnaire link with the participant so they can fill it out themselves while discussing with a Navigator.
 - Assessing the participant's interest in child care and readiness for starting, growing, or expanding a licensed child care program, which includes collecting additional information about the participant:
 - Why they want to start, sustain, or expand their child care program
 - Obstacles they are anticipating
 - Kind of experience caring for children
 - Years of experience caring for children
 - Collecting information about how the participant heard about Wayfinder
 - Identifying the type of assistance that the participant needs (starting, sustaining, or expanding)
 - If starting a program, identifying the type of program (family child care or child care center)
 - NOTE: A participant may not yet know what type of program they plan to start. It is adequate to identify that this is unknown.
 - If starting a program, discussing their progress through the licensing process so far.

- Discussing next steps, including creating a participation plan, eligibility for startup vouchers, and a summary of other resources available

Participant Status

A potential participant is considered a participant in Wayfinder when they have received Wayfinder services and/or completed an Inquiry Conversation with a Navigator.

For example, if a potential participant contacts a Navigator and requests information about training availability and the Navigator makes a referral to the Professional Development team, this potential participant has become a participant. Any delivery of technical assistance causes this status change. That includes the technical assistance provided during an Inquiry Conversation, even if the Inquiry Conversation results in the participant deciding not to work with a Navigator or continue their plans to start, sustain, or expand their child care program.

Participation Plan Phase

The participation plan phase includes the time that Navigators spend creating a Participation Plan and working towards the goals described in it with participants. It begins with the Intake Conversation and concludes when the goals set in the Participation Plan are completed.

Intake Process

Like the inquiry process, the intake process will vary based on participant needs and the preferences of the local Navigator. One purpose of the intake process is to establish or deepen the relationship with the Navigator, collect additional information, and make plans working together.

The following steps illustrate the important elements that should be included in the intake process:

- 1) Schedule an Intake Conversation with the participant.
- 2) The Intake Conversation should include the following:
 - Explaining Wayfinder services in more detail and discussing options in how to participate
 - Assessing the participant's specific assistance needs
 - Setting goals using the Wayfinder Participation Plan
 - Making a plan for how to work together, including contact preferences, meeting frequency, participation in learning communities, if offered, and an overall timeline
 - Introducing important resources as needed depending on program type, assistance type, and, if starting a child care program, how far along they are in the process:

- Resources related background study requirements
- Resources related to Develop and training requirements
- Collecting additional information about the participant, including:
 - Develop ID
 - Educational degrees and certifications
 - Current occupation
 - How long they anticipate staying in the field
 - If relevant, how clear they are on the licensing process and whether or not they have attended licensing orientations
 - If relevant, what related assistance they have already received

3) Ask the participant to sign the Wayfinder Participation Agreement.

Additional Activities

The additional activities completed during the Participation Plan Phase are based on the goals set in the Participation Plan.

Post-Participation Plan Phase

The Post-Participation Plan Phase includes the time after the participant has completed the goals set in the Participation Plan. For example, if a participant's goal was to start a licensed program, they would enter the post-participation phase after receiving their license.

Some important elements of the post-participation phase are:

Regular Check-ins

To ensure participants continue to receive the support they need to sustain and grow their programs, Navigators will check-in with participants at least once every 6 months for the first two years after completion of participation in Wayfinder. A check-in could take the form of an email, a phone call, or a meeting.

Reconnect Events

Navigators may also decide to host reconnect events, which are gatherings of previous participants that provide opportunities to learn about topics of shared interest, to meet colleagues, and to request additional assistance.

Assistance Formats and Models

Technical assistance can be provided in the following formats:

- Text chat, e.g. the live chat function on the Wayfinder website, Facebook Messenger, etc.
- Email
- Phone
- Video call

- In-person one-on-one
- In-person group

These formats can be combined into different models for delivering technical assistance. Some possible models include:

Flexible one-on-one assistance model

- Structure
 - One-on-one intake conversations
 - One-on-one assistance conversations selected from a set of topics based on participants' interests and needs
 - Additional one-on-one assistance as needed
- Estimated Time:
 - Hours of Assistance Received by Participant: 20 hours
- Notes
 - Creates flexibility in working with participants at different points in the process and receiving different assistance types

Cohort model

- Structure
 - One-on-one intake conversations
 - A repeating sequence of scheduled learning community meetings on common topics related to assistance needs, which participants experience as a cohort
 - 5-7 sessions, meeting weekly or every other week
 - Some sessions with all participants combined, some sessions separated based on program type or assistance type
 - Additional one-on-one assistance as needed
 - Peer support conversation in a Facebook group
- Estimated Time
 - Hours of Assistance Received by Participant: 20 hours
- Notes
 - Possible topics could include startup support, burnout support, new director support
 - Requires consistent recruitment of new participants so that new cohorts are always beginning soon
 - Makes delivery of technical assistance on common topics more efficient for Navigators

- Builds connection between participants

A hybrid cohort/one-on-one model

- Structure
 - One-on-one intake conversations
 - Initial learning community meeting
 - One-on-one assistance conversations selected from a set of topics based on participants' interests and needs
 - Additional one-on-one assistance as needed
 - Concluding learning community meeting
 - Peer support conversation in a Facebook group
- Estimated Time
 - Hours of Assistance Received by Participant: 20 hours
- Notes
 - Provides flexibility through individualized assistance while also creating peer connection between participants

Assistance Topics

The technical assistance provided by Navigators includes the following topics:

- Individual Assessment
- Community Assessment
- Licensing Process
- Finances and Marketing
- Program, Policies, and Contracts
- Record Keeping and Reporting
- Location and Environment
- Emergency Planning, Safety, and Health
- Resources and Referrals
- Licensing Referral
- Business Consulting Referral
- Professional Development Referral
- Parent Aware Referral

The following is an illustrative list of possible details Navigators might discuss when providing assistance on each topic:

Individual Assessment

- What are the next steps to making my idea happen?
- Do I like caring for children?

- Do I do well in this situation?
- Do I have this kind of skill needed?

Community Assessment

- Community child care needs
- Assessment of other child care programs in the same community

Licensing Process

- County Orientations/DHS New Applicant Info Sessions
- Three recommendations
- Individual forms that need to be filled out, e.g. floor plan, emergency plan, etc.
- Develop account and membership
- Application
- Individual Child Care Program Plan requirements
- Behavior guidance requirements
- Pre-service training requirements
- Background studies
- Fire marshal inspection
- Licensor inspection
- Licensing lookup
- Rule and statute
- What to do when having issues with licensing process/licensors, e.g. if a licensor is not getting back to the participant
 - Licensor contact
 - County licensing supervisors
 - County commissioners
 - Family Child Care Ombudsperson contact

Finances and Marketing

- Business development pathway
- Business structure
 - Secretary of State business filing
- EIN with IRS
- Budget considerations
- Marketing, including online business listings and website
 - Licensing lookup for marketing research
- Setting rates
- Business liability insurance
- Workers' compensation insurance
- Tax accountant and system of bookkeeping

Program, Policies, and Contracts

- Curriculum/activity resources
- Equipment licensing requirements
- Communication plan
 - Family communication, including interviewing prospective families
 - How you choose, how families choose
 - Might not be good fit for family, for program
 - What kinds of questions will parents have?
 - What questions should you ask?
 - Working with family to find a good fit
 - Understanding what could make it a difficult relationship
 - Newsletters
 - Daily notes
- Language access line
- Child care apps
- Policies, including licensing requirements
 - CCC
 - Child Care Program Plan
 - Nap and Rest Policy
 - Program Drug and Alcohol Policy
 - Staffing Policies
 - Behavior Guidance Policies
 - Emergency and Accident Policies
 - Program Grievance Procedure
 - Risk Reduction
 - Health Consultant
 - Maltreatment of Minors Mandated Reporting Policy
- Family contract

Record Keeping and Reporting

- Admin plan
 - A plan for keeping track of records, staying in compliance
- Recording keeping plan
 - Learning records
 - Attendance records
 - Background studies
 - Employment records
 - Use of substitute records

- Pet records
- Compliance
 - Annual inspections
 - Licensing documents
 - Show participants the licensing lookup page so they know what information is publicly available about non-compliance
 - Child files
 - Licensing files
 - Reporting requirements

Location and Environment

- Location assessment support
 - Questions to ask when considering a location
- Finding a location
- Location modifications needed
- Grants/loans for facility improvements/renovations
- Choose Space Places MN
 - Service to identify environmental toxins based on previous use or surrounding areas
- Permission from property owner
- Environmental requirements
 - Equipment, layout, space and number of children, access to outdoor space
- Fire, building, and health inspections
 - Requirement to work with a licensed design professional (architect) for centers before scheduling fire inspection
 - Fire marshal info sheets
- Checklist for FCC

Emergency Planning, Safety, and Health

- Home safety checklists
- Weather related play
- Permission slips
- Sunscreens
- Accident protocols and procedures
- Allergy Prevention and Response
- Emergency Preparedness
 - Fire and storm drills, etc.
- Handling and Disposal of Bodily Fluids

- Health policies
- Risk Reduction Plan
- Infectious diseases

Licensing Referral

- Referral to licensors

Business Consulting Referral

- Referral to business supports resource partners

Professional Development Referral

- Referral to professional development resource partners

Parent Aware Referral

- Referral to Parent Aware recruiters or coaches

Resources and Referrals

- Referral to other resource partners

Resources and Referrals

Providing participants with referrals to resource partners is a capacity building strategy that ensures child care programs are connected to the many resources that are available. Navigators act as resource guides, making these connections. Through collaborative relationships with our partners in licensing supports, business supports, financial supports, and program supports, Navigators help child care programs build strong relationships with:

- Licensors, who support them in ensuring the health and safety of the children in their care.
- Business consultants, who assist them in building stable, sustainable businesses.
- Grant, scholarship, loan, and supplementary revenue program administrators, who support them with additional funding.
- Program coaches, workforce advisors, and professional development advisors, who assist them in creating high-quality educational environments and career success.
- Other statewide, regional, and local supporters of child care programs.

Key Resource Partners

Within the categories listed above, there are a few key resources and resource partners:

Licensing Supports

- DHS Child Care Center Licensing
- DHS Family Child Care Licensing
- County Family Child Care Licensing
- Family Child Care Ombuds Office

Business Supports

- First Children's Finance Business Development

Financial Supports

- Child Care Aware startup grants and regional grants

- T.E.A.C.H. scholarships
- REETAIN bonuses

Program Supports

- Empower to Educate
- Parent Aware
- Center for Inclusive Child Care

Resource Partner Information

More details about each of these resources and resource partners, as well as details about others, are included in the Resource Partner Information section of the Appendix.

Referral Process

The referral process with each resource partner will be different based on relationships between navigators and resource partner staff, local assistance needs and capacity, and the specific needs of Wayfinder participants. It is important that Navigators cultivate strong, personal relationships with resource partner staff to ensure that these referrals are coordinated and make best use of the resources available.

When making referrals to resource partners, Navigators ensure that there is clarity in the distinction between their role and the resource partner's role. This clarity is important to ensure that there is consistency in the resource information provided. In providing this clarity, Navigators are honoring the expertise of resource partners, emphasizing that their role is to help participants navigate the many resources available.

Making referrals is important for conserving Navigators' time and energy. To succeed, Navigators will need to work with many participants. Their role is to balance developing strong, trusting relationships with each participant and supporting many participants. Making referrals to resource partners will be critical in achieving this balance.

Documenting Successes and Challenges

Documenting successes and challenges is a capacity building strategy that will refine and improve Wayfinder services by providing detailed information to decision makers who can identify trends, support successes, and strategize to address barriers and obstacles. It also has the potential to create systems level change, detailing challenges that lay beyond the scope of Navigators' work. Information that navigators document will be useful for directing the program's resources efficiently and for making ongoing improvements in meeting child care needs.

How to Identify Successes and Challenges

Navigators should listen for mentions of successes and challenges in all communications with participants and, when appropriate, request more information. Even if the challenges or successes seem relatively minor, documenting them will provide great insight into how we can improve the experiences of our participants. The following categories of information may be useful in identifying successes and challenges.

Program Types

The two program types—family child care and child care centers—are a starting point for identifying successes and challenges. Consider the differences between these program types and the types of successes and challenges specific to each. For example, consider the following:

- The challenges that an individual who wants to start a child care center has in finding a location.
- The challenges that a family child care provider has in operating a business in their home.
- The success of a child care center in retaining educators.
- The success of a family child care provider in developing an innovative shared services partnership with other family child care providers in their community.

Assistance Types

The three types of assistance—starting, sustaining, and expanding—provide another perspective that is useful in identifying successes and challenges. Consider the unique successes and challenges experienced in these different phases of a program. For example, consider the following:

- Difficulty accessing licensing materials because they are not available in languages other than English.
- Receiving the support of a peer mentor in responding to licensing violations and successfully avoiding closure.
- Lack of clarity about how to select a new location for a current program that would like to expand.

Resource Types

The four main types of resources—licensing supports, business supports, financial supports, and program supports—are another guide to the types of successes and challenges programs may experience. The need for supports in these areas indicates the possibility of significant successes and challenges. For example, consider the following:

- Delays in the licensing process.
- Increased enrollment in a program because of a successfully implemented marketing plan.
- Difficulty finding funding for starting a child care center despite a clear need in the community.
- An educator’s renewed excitement about their program after implementing a new curriculum.

Wayfinder and Our Partners

The examples given in the section above are about the needs that resources partners address, but we should also consider successes and challenges related to these organizations themselves, including Wayfinder. For example, consider the following:

- A potential Wayfinder participant who is frustrated after some difficulty scheduling an initial meeting with a Navigator.
- A program that stops participating in a food program because of the difficulty keeping up with the paperwork.
- A center director who consistently supports their educators in participating in the T.E.A.C.H. scholarship program.

Prior to, During, and After Wayfinder

The different phases of a Navigator’s work also create opportunities for learning. Navigators should invite participants to share about successes and challenges during inquiry and intake conversations. Identifying challenges and successes at the start of our relationship with participants will help us understand and address issues early and retain and support participants who might otherwise drop out of the program. During participation in Wayfinder, there will be many opportunities to notice successes and challenges, but a Navigator could regularly invite these conversations as well. Finally, another opportunity to request information about successes and challenges is when reconnecting with Wayfinder participants after they finish participating in Wayfinder.

How to Document Successes and Challenges

When an obstacle is identified, it should be documented in the temporary case management system in one of the Successes/Challenges Log data fields. Consider the following guidelines when documenting successes and challenges:

- Include details of participants' stories and circumstances. This helps in understanding the different forms that common obstacles can take and the specific ways they are overcome.
- Include information about any ways in which the Navigator or participant sought additional information about an obstacle, e.g. who you contacted and what you found out when looking into a building inspection delay on behalf of a participant.
- Even if an obstacle is not something you can address or fix, it is very important to collect and record information about it. Documenting obstacles that are outside of our control will help us understand what is preventing progress and identify who can help to address the issues that are external to our program.
- Identifying details about how participants successfully move through the process can help understand and celebrate efficiencies in the system.
- Collecting success and challenge information from around the state will provide relevant and real-life stories about our program that we can share with policymakers and other organizations doing similar work statewide.
- Details about successes and challenges that participants face, even if they seem obvious to you, will facilitate ongoing program monitoring and improvement.
- Program leadership depends on you to communicate what is going on so that we can work together to address issues and celebrate successes that arise.
- Individual identities will be kept confidential.



Capacity Building Tools



Child Care Wayfinder Website

The Child Care Wayfinder website is available at www.childcarewayfinder.org. It includes basic information about the processes for starting and growing (sustaining and expanding) child care programs as well as a list of resources that are available to provide support.

Processes for starting and growing

The summary of the startup process for family child care programs includes the following:

- Questions
- Prepare
- Apply for a license
- Policies
- Open & Operate

The summary of the startup process for child care centers includes the following:

- Questions
- Business
- Information Sessions
- Apply
- Training
- Open & Operate

The summary of the process for growing family child care programs includes the following:

- License types
- Program types

The summary of the process for growing child care centers includes the following:

- Increase license capacity

Resources

The list of resources includes

- Parent Aware

- Empower to Educate
- REETAIN Bonuses
- T.E.A.C.H. Scholarships
- Food Program Resources
- Child Care Services Grants
- Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP)
- First Children's Finance
- Center for Inclusive Child Care

In the future, this list of resources will also include local resources.

Navigator contact information

In addition to organizing this information, a primary purpose of the website is to direct people to connecting with their local Navigator. The website provides a way for potential Wayfinder participants to find their local Navigator by county. It also provides two methods for contacting them: a contact form and the Navigator's extension at the Wayfinder 888 phone number.

Language access

The website includes translations of the content from English into Spanish, Hmong, and Somali. It also provides an option to call the Wayfinder 888 number and speak with someone in Spanish, Hmong, Somali, or other languages.

In the future, videos in English, Spanish, Hmong, and Somali will be added to explain important content on the website, further improving language access.

Case Management System / Develop

The Wayfinder case management system is used to record important information about Wayfinder participants, including tracking the assistance Navigators provide to each participant. The information entered in the case management system provides Navigators and their supervisors with a way to track participant progress and manage Navigator caseloads. The data is also used to generate reports for assessing the effectiveness of local strategy and tracking progress towards regional and statewide capacity building goals.

The Wayfinder case management system includes an interface with Develop, which is used to track the assistance provided to each participant in Develop as well. The information transferred to Develop is used for a different purpose. It documents relationship-based professional development (RBPD) events on the learning record of each participant, providing them with Develop-approved training hours for the time they spend working with Navigators.

Data Entry Procedure

Information about participants should be entered by Navigators into the case management system and Develop after each communication using the follow procedure:

- 1) After each communication with a participant, Navigators should log a new interaction in the Tracking section of the case management system.
- 2) If the interaction is an RBPD event, navigators should check the “RBPD Event” box. This transfers the interaction information to Develop.
- 3) Navigators should also review the fields in the case record and add new information or edit any information that has changed.

NOTE: While it is not necessary for navigators to login to Develop to enter RBPD events, it is still necessary for navigators to login to Develop at least once every 60 days to maintain access to the Develop system.

Additional Information

See the training documents on the homepage in the case management system for detailed instructions on how to use the case management system to enter data.

Startup Vouchers

Startup vouchers are used to support Wayfinder participants in obtaining equipment or learning materials that support the success of their program. They can be used to support programs that will be licensed soon or have been licensed recently as well as for programs that will increase their licensed capacity soon or have increased their licensed capacity recently.

Amounts

The amount of the voucher is based on program type and total licensed capacity. The base amounts for program type are:

- Child Care Center: \$2,000
- Family Child Care: \$1,000

These base amounts are calculated assuming a minimum of 20 licensed spaces for child care centers and 10 licensed spaces for family child care programs, i.e. \$100 per licensed space.

If the programs have more licensed spaces, their startup voucher amounts are increased accordingly. The basic calculation is that programs receive \$100 per licensed space for the first 20 spaces and \$50 per licensed space for any licensed space beyond 20.

For family child care programs, the possible startup voucher amounts are:

- \$1000 for 10 or fewer licensed spaces
- \$1100 for 11 licensed spaces
- \$1200 for 12 licensed spaces
- \$1300 for 13 licensed spaces
- \$1400 for 14 licensed spaces

For child care centers, the possible startup voucher amounts range from \$2,000 for centers with 20 or fewer licensed spaces to a maximum of \$10,000 for centers with 180 or greater licensed spaces. A few examples will illustrate:

- \$2000 for 15 licensed spaces (based on \$2000 base amount for centers)
- \$2650 for 33 licensed spaces $(\$100 \times 20) + (\$50 \times 13) = \$2650$
- \$5000 for 80 licensed spaces $(\$100 \times 20) + (\$50 \times 60) = \$5000$

- \$10,000 for 182 licensed spaces ($(\$100 \times 20) + (\$50 \times 160) = \$10,000$)

See [this chart](#) for a list of startup voucher amounts for every licensed capacity.

NOTE: The base amount for child centers is \$2000 and the base amount for family child care programs is \$1000. If there are centers that have fewer than 20 licensed spaces or family child care programs that have fewer than 10 licensed spaces, they still receive the base amount.

The determination of the exact voucher amount will initially be based on the participant's anticipated total licensed capacity, which will be discussed with their navigator, recorded on their startup voucher agreement form, and entered by the navigator into the participant's case record.

Because the actual total licensed capacity may be different than what was anticipated, it is recommended (but not required) that the startup voucher be provided in two installments, 75% of the amount of the voucher prior to licensure and 25% of the amount of the voucher after licensure. This provides a way to make adjustments to the amount based on actual total licensed capacity. Actual total licensed capacity will be entered by the navigator into the participant's case record based on data from licensing.

If vouchers are distributed in two installments, the two installments will be documented by grant administrators in their records and by navigators in a note titled "Startup Voucher Installments" on the case record of their participants. Navigators are responsible for ensuring grant administrators have updated information about the voucher amounts for each participant and when they are eligible to receive the installments.

NOTE: While it is recommended that the startup voucher be provided in two installments, local agencies may provide startup vouchers in one installment.

Additional Amounts

As part of Wayfinder's equity commitment, we offer additional startup voucher amounts for programs located in access equity areas, programs with Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) program leaders (i.e. in the role of owner/operator, director, or an equivalent role), and/or programs with documented plans to enroll BIPOC children and provide a culturally relevant and responsive curriculum/activities for BIPOC children.

The additional amount offered is 10% of the startup voucher amount. This increase applies to both family child care programs and child care centers. For example, a family child care program with 10 licensed spaces located in an access equity area, operated by a BIPOC

provider, or serving BIPOC children would receive \$1,100 (a 10% increase over the base \$1,000 amount). And a child care center located in an access equity area or operated by a BIPOC provider would receive an additional 10% over the amount calculated based on licensed capacity, e.g. a child care center with 30 licensed spaces would receive \$2,750 (a 10% increase over \$2,500), and a child care center with 180 licensed spaces would receive \$11,000 (a 10% increase over \$10,000).

Vendors

Vouchers can be used with the following approved vendors if funds are available:

- Redleaf Press
- Lakeshore
- Kaplan
- Constructive Playthings
- Becker's School Supplies
- Discount School Supply
- Indigebox
- ABC & Toy Zone

Most regions do not have funds available from all vendors. When allocating funds, Grant Administrators selected vendors based on historical spending patterns. Grant Administrators will provide Navigators with a list of vendors available in their region.

Funds

The total funds available for vouchers was allocated to each region based on the access needs of the region. The total remaining funds for vouchers is based on how many vouchers have been provided to participants.

In August 2024, remaining voucher funds were reallocated to each region based on use of the vouchers during the first 2 years of Wayfinder services.

Grant Administrators will provide Navigators with updates on the total remaining funds for vouchers by vendor.

Startup Eligibility

The following eligibility requirements must be met to receive a startup voucher before or shortly after licensure. Child Care Wayfinder participants must:

- Be actively seeking a family child care or child care center license OR have been issued a license within 6 months.

- Not have previously received a startup voucher
- Be actively working with a Navigator to accomplish set goals OR work with a Navigator to identify goals needed to maintain ongoing operation and growth.
- Commit to remain licensed for two years beyond the date of receiving the items.

Startup vouchers can be used prior to licensure based on Navigators' assessment of participants' progress towards licensure and when items are needed.

Expansion Eligibility

The following eligibility requirements must be met to receive a startup voucher for expansion of a program's capacity. Child Care Wayfinder participants must:

- Be actively seeking to increase the capacity of their child care program OR have increased the capacity of their child care program in the past 6 months.
- Be actively working with a Navigator to accomplish set goals OR work with a Navigator to identify goals needed to maintain ongoing operation and growth.
- Commit to remain licensed for two years beyond the date of first receiving their startup voucher items.

NOTE: Generally Wayfinder participants are only eligible for one startup voucher. However, they may be eligible for an increased amount at a later date if they increase their capacity. This extended startup voucher eligibility includes FCC programs increasing their capacity by changing license class, centers increasing their capacity by adding classrooms, as well as expansion by other means.

Additional Amount Eligibility

Eligibility for the 10% additional amount will be determined by navigators in the following ways:

- For Access Equity Areas: By verifying that the program is located in or is planned to be located in an access equity area using [a current version of the access equity area map](#).
- For BIPOC Program Leaders: By verifying that the information entered by the participant in the Race/Ethnicity field of the inquiry questionnaire (viewed in the case management system) lists a Black, Indigenous, or People of Color race/ethnicity category.
- For Programs Serving BIPOC Children: By reviewing documents submitted by the participant describing plans to enroll BIPOC children and provide a culturally relevant and responsive curriculum/activities for BIPOC children.

NOTE: The Coordinating Office can provide assistance in determining eligibility for the additional amount if needed.

Recoupment

Navigators are responsible for tracking the license status of programs that received startup vouchers. If a program closes before meeting its two-year commitment, the Navigator will notify the Grant Administrator, who will be responsible for recoupment based on agency policies.

Process

When distributing startup vouchers to participants:

Eligibility

1. Navigators will determine that a Wayfinder participant is eligible to receive a startup voucher and that funds are available to offer a voucher. All requirements listed under “I understand prior to receiving a voucher for my program; I must:” on the Startup Voucher Agreement form must be completed.
2. Navigators will determine if a Wayfinder participant is eligible for an additional amount of 10% based on the additional amount eligibility requirements described above.
3. If the participant is eligible for an additional amount of 10%, navigators will make a note titled “Startup Voucher Additional Amount Eligibility” and include in it a brief description of the basis for the additional amount. Navigators will also upload any supporting documentation in the Files section of the participant’s case.

Forms

4. If the Participation Form is not yet completed, Navigators will send the Participation Form to participants using the case management system and confirm that it has been signed.
5. Navigators will also provide the Startup Voucher Agreement form to participants using the case management system and confirm that it has been signed.
6. Navigators will plan goals with participants, enter them in the case management system, and track progress to completion.,
7. Navigators will make a list of proposed expenditures using the form available in the [Wayfinder shared drive](#) or a similar form.

Purchase

8. Navigators will assist participants in selecting items from available vendors’ catalogs with a total value up to the amount of the voucher.
9. Navigators will coordinate with Grant Administrators to use vendors’ websites to place the order.

10. If the startup voucher is given in two installments, navigators will make a note titled “Startup Voucher Installments” on the case record of their participants and will record the date and amount of each installment in this note.
11. After startup voucher funds have been used, navigators will enter the date the startup voucher was used and the total amount used in the case management system.

Tracking and Updates

12. Grant Administrators will track expenditures in the spreadsheet provided by the Coordinating Office.
13. Grant Administrators will review and monitor spending on this spreadsheet by vendor and by region.
14. Grant Administrators will provide updates to Navigators about the availability of funds from each vendor.
15. Grant Administrators will cross check recorded expenditures against monthly or quarterly updates sent by vendors.

Common Barriers

Navigators will encounter several common barriers in the course of their work with participants. An important role that Navigators play is in assisting participants in overcoming some of these barriers. Other barriers are beyond the scope of Wayfinder.

Gathering information about barriers, even when beyond the scope of the one-stop assistance network is important. More detailed information about barriers will contribute to the process of developing systemic solutions for removing barriers, including:

- Additional resources for child care providers
- Better collaboration across systems
- Policy changes

Barriers Within the Scope of Child Care Wayfinder

Child Care Wayfinder addresses barriers experienced by child care providers through enhanced technical assistance, connection to resources, and coordination across systems. These barriers include:

Challenges navigating confusing and complex processes

Multiple agencies and organizations supporting child care programs have their own legislative or policy requirements. Licensing is only one agency of many that a child care provider will need to work with to start or grow their program. This means the participant will need to understand and respond to the varied regulations and expectations. Some of the agencies involved include, the Fire Marshal, child care center licensing, family child care licensing, food programs, and the Child Care Assistance Program.

Additionally, grants and loans also have different requirements and expectations based upon legislative requirements and program policies. Receiving a grant may include additional follow through of requirements.

All the varied pieces can make it difficult to navigate the ability to start or grow a child care program.

Lack of awareness of or access to available resources

There are a number of resources that child care providers may have difficulty accessing. Providers may be new to the available information and support for those interested starting a child care program. Providers currently running a program may not realize all the resources that are available locally or statewide.

Lack of knowledge and support around business practices

Providers may know there might be some business requirements connected to being a child care provider but may be unaware of the amount of business needs or that there are programs available to help support them.

Lack of information available in languages other than English

When someone is interested in becoming licensed and cannot access the information in their language easily, it may deter them from starting a program. It takes a lot of extra time, energy, and resources to look for information in a language other than English. It can also mean confusion in communication.

Costs of startup equipment and materials

Potential providers may want to start a child care program or improve their program and not have the funding to be able to purchase basics that are needed.

Understanding child care is a business and a profession

Providers may know they like children and want to care for them to make a living. They may not be aware that they are talking about running a business and will need to learn that a being a business owner is part of caring for children.

Understanding and/or awareness of community need for child care

A provider may want to start a child care program and may not understand the need in their own community.

Lack of resources related to finding a location and facility to rent purchase or build

A potential provider may struggle with renting a location because of landlord concerns. Or a potential provider may be looking for a location and building and cannot find one where they wish to provide care or the building requires a large renovation project to meet licensing regulation.

Barriers Beyond the Scope of Child Care Wayfinder

Many barriers experienced by child care providers are outside the current scope of Child Care Wayfinder. These barriers include:

Facility costs

- Lack of funding and resources to purchase, rent, build, or cover cost of large renovations.

Facility design

- Access to individuals with expertise in facility design who understand the requirements needing to be met prior to submitting an application for a license.

Licensing regulations, delays, and support limitations

- Licensing regulations creating inability to find locations/facility that meets location and need of community but not licensing regulations
- Inconsistent processes for family child care licensing from one county to another.
- Inconsistency in supports offered between counties including expectations around language supports for dual or non-English speaking individuals.
- Lack of racially, ethnically, and linguistically diverse licensing staff
- Licensing does not have staff or funding to address potential child care program increase.

Inspection delays

- Delays in obtaining inspections for fire, building, or health codes, or delays caused when the building/space does not meet inspection requirements.
- Fire marshals do not have staff or funding to address potential child care program increase.

Building code and zoning ordinance complexity

- Variation in building codes and zoning ordinances by locality. Further, zoning ordinances for commercial property can be complicated, and may prohibit rental property from being used as a child care business.

Recruitment and retention of educators

- Ability to attract qualified staff and to offer wages competitive with other industries.

Background study delays and disqualifications

- Length of time it takes to receive background study results
- Household members that may be disqualified with a completed background study.

Technology access and limited technology knowledge

- Lack of access to technology and/or lack of technology knowledge

Additional Tools

Additional tools to support Navigators in their work that are still being developed:

- Licensing process checklist
- Participant/program readiness/sustainability assessment
- Participation planning form
- Location finding resources
- List of architects
- Policy templates
- Resource packet

Child Care Wayfinder

A one-stop navigation network for starting and growing programs

Appendix

Language Access Process

If a Wayfinder participant indicates they would like an interpreter, the Navigator should follow these steps:

- 1) If the interpretation services are needed in Spanish, Hmong, or Somali, contact the Language Access Line. If interpretation services are needed in any other language, contact LanguageLine Solutions.
 - See the current Language Access Contact Information for a list of names, phone numbers, and email addresses.
- 2) Schedule a three-way phone call or video chat with the Wayfinder participant and the interpreter.

Language Access Contact Information

Language Access Line Team Leader

Julie Yang
jyang@thinksmall.org
651-366-6792

Hmong Language Access Line Specialist

Julie Yang
jyang@thinksmall.org
651-366-6792

Somali Language Access Line Specialist

Abdulkadir Warsame
awarsame@thinksmall.org
651-641-6673

Spanish Language Access Line Specialist

Rocio Sosa
rsosa@thinksmall.org
651-641-6660

LanguageLine Solutions (for all languages other than Spanish, Hmong, or Somali)

1 866-874-3972 (code: 683387)

Funding Resources

Child Care Regional Grant

- Description: Covers the cost of supplies, equipment, technology, and training
- Type: Program
- Delivered By: Child Care Aware of MN District Offices
- Timeline: September 1 - 25 each year

Emergency Grant

- Description: Assist in covering costs associated with emergency situations
- Type: Program
- Delivered By: Child Care Aware of MN District Offices
- Timeline: Year round - subject to available funds

Startup Grant

- Description: Assist in covering costs of items required to open a child care license and to help cover startup costs
- Type: Program
- Delivered By: Child Care Aware of MN District Offices
- Timeline: Year round - subject to available funds

Community Conversations for Early Childhood Entrepreneurs

- Description: A peer networking and resource group for entrepreneurs of color who currently own a child care business or are interested in starting a new child care business. Participants receive a grant of \$5000 for FCC and CCC.
- Type: Program
- Delivered By: First Children's Finance
- Timeline: Upon completion of the cohort.

Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)

- Description: The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) provides funds to help family day care homes and child care centers serve nutritious meals and snacks to young children. The CACFP is a United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) program administered through the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE).
- Type: Program
- Delivered By: MN Department of Education

- Timeline: Year round

Child Care Economic Development Grants

- Description: Funding is for grants to local communities to increase the number of quality child care providers to support economic development. Eligible recipients include a : public entity, Tribal Nation, community service agency, or 501(c) (3) having experience in one or more of the following: the operation of, planning for, financing of, advocacy for, or advancement of the delivery of child care services.
- Individual child care programs, both family and center-based, seeking funds to establish or expand existing operations are encouraged to partner on their funding request with local or regional organizations with experience in the planning and/or financing of child care facilities and programs. Requests in state funds up to \$600,000 are allowed for multi-location projects. Single projects can request up to \$300,000.
- Type: Program
- Delivered: Child Care Economic Development, Office of Child Care Community Partnerships
- Timeline: For the most up-to-date information regarding upcoming grant rounds see the information on [the Child Care Economic Development page](#) of the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development.

Access to Technology Grant

- Description: Awards vary from \$100-\$1,000 over the course of the grant program. Funds are used to increase access to technology for child care business management purposes including: connectivity, equipment, child care business management software, and technology skills training.
- Type: Program
- Delivered By: First Children’s Finance
- Timeline: Rolling basis with two grant rounds per year
<https://www.firstchildrensfinance.org/for-businesses/grants>

Facility Revitalization Grant

- Description: Awards vary from \$500-\$20,000 based on license type. Funds are used to complete facility improvements, minor renovations, and related equipment and services, including assistance to meet licensing requirements to establish, maintain, or expand licensed and legal unlicensed child care sites.
- Type: Program
- Delivered By: First Children’s Finance
- Timeline: Rolling basis through June 2025. For the most up-to-date information regarding upcoming grant rounds go to <https://www.firstchildrensfinance.org/for-businesses/grants> (and scroll to the bottom of the page)

Greater Minnesota Child Care Facility Grants

- Description: Grants must not be awarded for more than \$500,000 per project or more than \$2,000,000 in two years to an applicant for one or more projects in the same city or county. A grant may be used to acquire land or an interest in land, predesign, design, renovate, construct, furnish, and equip facilities to provide child care or for other child care facility improvements that support the purposes for which this grant program is established. Money from the account in the general fund may also be used to upgrade or expand existing nonprofit child care facilities to meet state requirements.
- Type: Program
- Delivered By: MN Employment and Economic Development
- Timeline: For the most up-to-date information regarding upcoming grant rounds go to Greater Minnesota Child Care Facility Grants / Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development.

Forgivable, Shariya Compliant, and Traditional Loans

- Description: Loans are subject to credit approval and range from \$5,000-\$25,000 for Family Child Care and \$5,000-\$125,000 for Child Care Centers.
- Type: Program
- Delivered By: First Children's Finance
- Timeline: Year round - subject to available funds

Small Business Loan

- Description: Loans are subject to credit approval and offer amounts up to \$100,000 for new and existing business owners. Funds can be used for leasehold improvements, renovations to rented space, inventory and supplies, machinery or equipment, working capital, debt refinancing, and payroll. Businesses must be located in Anoka, Carver, Chisago, Dakota, Hennepin, Isanti, Le Sueur, Mille Lacs, Ramsey, Scott, Sherburne, Sibley, Washington, and Wright.
- Type: Program
- Delivered By: WomenVenture
- Timeline: Year round - subject to available funds

Small Dollar Loan

- Description: Loans are subject to credit approval and offer amounts up to \$2,500 to support business growth and build credit. Businesses must be located in Anoka, Carver, Chisago, Dakota, Hennepin, Isanti, Le Sueur, Mille Lacs, Ramsey, Scott, Sherburne, Sibley, Washington, and Wright.
- Type: Program
- Delivered By: WomenVenture
- Timeline: Year round - subject to available funds

WomenVenture

- Description: Awards vary up to \$5,000 for both licensed child care centers and licensed family child care. Funds can be used on a variety of items including licensing requirements, learning materials, technology, and appliances needed for the child care business.
- Type: Program
- Delivered By: WomenVenture
- Timeline: Year round - subject to available funds

Parent Aware Grant

- Description: Must be participating in Parent Aware to achieve a star rating or be re-rating. Funds vary from \$1,000 in Building Quality to \$4,000 upon receiving a 4 star rating.
- Type: Program
- Delivered By: Child Care Aware of MN Regional Offices
- Timeline: Parent Aware cohorts begin January or July each year with funds awarded after completion.

Child Care Wayfinder Startup Voucher

- Description: Vouchers assist with purchasing necessary materials for initial licensing or additional items to increase the quality of the child care program.
- Type: Program
- Delivered By: Child Care Aware of MN Regional Offices
- Timeline: Year round - subject to available funds

Great Start Compensation Support Payments

- Description: Great Start Compensation Support Payments is a permanent program and available to eligible licensed family child care providers, licensed child care centers, certified child care centers and Tribally licensed providers on a monthly basis. These payments are meant to increase early childhood educator compensation. Award amounts are based on the sum total of full-time equivalents (FTEs) with a set amount awarded per FTE. One person can account for up to two FTEs.

The Great Start Compensation Support Payment Program also includes payments for legal, nonlicensed providers. Legal Nonlicensed One-Time Payments are \$500 payments meant to help cover the costs of registration as a provider under the Child Care Assistance Program.

- Type: Program
- Delivered By: Minnesota Department of Children, Youth, and Families
- Timeline: Grant periods run from the 10th of the month prior to the 23rd of the current grant round month. (Ex: July 10-Aug 23)
mn.gov/dhs/partners-and-providers/grants-rfps/great-start-grants/compensation-support/

Emerging Entrepreneur Loan Program

- Description: Provides loan capital for businesses that are owned and operated by minorities, low-income persons, women, veterans and/or persons with disabilities. Individuals must apply directly with a certified lender and DEED may be able to assist in identifying an appropriate lender.
- Type: Program
- Delivered By: MN Employment and Economic Development
- Timeline: Year round - subject to available funds

Native American Business Loan Program

- Description: The Minnesota Native American Business Loan Program supports the development of Native-owned and operated businesses and promotes economic opportunities for Native peoples throughout Minnesota. Applicants must be enrolled members of a federally recognized Minnesota-based band or tribe. Businesses must be wholly owned by an enrolled member and can be located anywhere in the state, although the bulk of the loans are made to businesses on a reservation.
- Type: Program
- Delivered By: MN Employment and Economic Development
- Timeline: Year round-subject to the availability of funds

MN Reservist and Veteran Startup Business Loan Program

- Description: Provides business loans and startup loans to individual veterans who have returned from active duty and want to start their own small business.
- Type: Program
- Delivered By: MN Employment and Economic Development
- Timeline: Year round - subject to available funds

Empower to Educate: Educator Preparation Stipend

- Description: \$300 for expenses related to necessary training, equipment, child care services to attend required meetings/trainings, transportation, etc.
- Type: Individual
- Delivered By: Child Care Aware of MN Coordinating Office
- Timeline: Year round - subject to available funds

Empower to Educate: 6 month bonus

- Description: \$600 for Center or Family Child Care after 6 months of being employed and completing specific checkpoints outlined on participation agreement.
- Type: Individual
- Delivered By: Child Care Aware of MN Coordinating Office
- Timeline: Year round - subject to available funds

T.E.A.C.H. Scholarship

- Description: Family child care providers, center-based staff, or school-age care staff can receive funding to take credits toward an associate or bachelor's degree in Child Development or Early Childhood Education at an accredited Minnesota college or university. T.E.A.C.H. Scholarships cover 85% of the cost of tuition and books for up to 18 credits per year. Recipients also receive a travel stipend and release time. Upon successful completion of nine or more credits, recipients may receive a two percent raise (center-based only) and/or a \$250-\$300 bonus.
- Type: Individual
- Delivered By: Child Care Aware of MN Coordinating Office
- Timeline: Applications must be in by the following deadlines to have a specific semester covered by the scholarship: Fall Semester=December 1, Spring Semester=May 1, Summer Semester=August 1

REETAIN Bonus

- Description: Used to supplement income for early childhood educators as they work to establish a career in the ECE field. Bonuses can be used for their program, professional development, or personal expenses and range from \$500-\$3000.
- Type: Individual
- Delivered By: Child Care Aware of MN Coordinating Office
- Timeline: Child Care Center applications run each year from October through November and Family Child Care applications from April through May

Resource Partner Information

Business Supports: Department of Employment and Economic Development

DEED programs promote business recruitment, expansion, and retention; international trade; workforce development; and community development. There are many areas throughout DEED that can benefit child care programs.

Small Business Assistance Office

- This office provides economic development consultations and support including answering questions ranging from basic process questions to addressing far more complex regulatory, financial, managerial, business structure and other questions.
- Examples of questions consultants can help with include, what form does a business need to file, where does the business get necessary forms, and with whom does the business file it?
- General Inquiries: deed.mnsbao@state.mn.us
- Website: <https://mn.gov/deed/business/help/sbao/>

Small Business Development Centers

- These centers provide professional expertise and guidance to small businesses.
- 9 locations throughout the state with several more satellite locations.
- General Inquiries: deed.mnsbdc@state.mn.us
- Program Contact: Bruce Strong (bruce.strong@state.mn.us)
- Website: <https://mn.gov/deed/business/help/sbdc/>

Small Business Partnerships Program

- This program enables local and regional community-based organizations across the state to support the startup, growth, and success of Minnesota's diverse entrepreneurs and small business owners through the delivery of high quality free or low-cost professional business development and technical assistance services.
- Many of these partner organizations also provide additional services such as loan capital.
- General Inquiries: mnsbp.deed@state.mn.us
- Program Contact: Brandon Toner (brandon.toner@state.mn.us)
- Website: <https://mn.gov/deed/business/help/small-business-partnerships/>

Emerging Entrepreneur Loan Program

- This program provides loan capital for businesses that are owned and operated by minorities, low-income persons, women, veterans and/or persons with disabilities. DEED provides grant funds to a network of nonprofit lenders which use these funds for loans to startup and expanding businesses throughout the state.
- Businesses must apply directly with a certified lender, although DEED may be able to assist in identifying an appropriate lender.
- Program Contact: Jason Burak (jason.burak@state.mn.us)
- Website: <https://mn.gov/deed/business/financing-business/deed-programs/elp/>

Workforce Strategy Consultants

- These consultants develop innovative workforce solutions by aligning resources, facilitating collaboration, and leveraging expertise in targeted industry sectors to drive economic equity and growth.
- Program Contacts
 - Central Region
 - Della Ludwig (della.ludwig@state.mn.us)
 - Metro Region
 - Adesewa Adesiji (adesewa.adesiji@state.mn.us)
 - Northeast Region
 - Shayla Drake (shayla.drake@state.mn.us)
 - Northwest Region
 - James Whirlwind Soldier (james.whirlwindsoldier@state.mn.us)
 - Southeast Region
 - Jessica O'Brien (jessica.obrien@state.mn.us)
 - Southwest Region
 - Jessica Miller (jessica.miller@state.mn.us)
- Website: <https://mn.gov/deed/business/help/workforce-assistance/wf-strategy.jsp>

Business Supports: First Children's Finance Business Development

First Children's Finance works with participants to meet their business needs and financial needs. The services offered can help to create a strong foundation for participants' programs.

- Help to start and grow a child care business
 - Trainings for Providers and Center Directors
 - Developed approved training
 - Business Leadership Cohorts
 - RBPB Business Coaching
 - Community Conversations for Early Childhood Entrepreneurs

- Existing Child Care Business
 - Financial Analysis and Business Assessment
 - Rate Studies
 - Business Plan Consulting
 - Policy and contract consulting
 - Marketing Plan Consulting
 - Human Resources and Professional Development of Staff
 - Strategic Planning
 - Crisis Business Support
 - Loans
 - Grants
- Launch a new Child Care Business
 - Market Research and Competitive Analysis
 - Financial Modeling
 - Rate Studies
 - Business Plan Consulting
 - Policy and contract consulting
 - Start up support
 - Strategic Planning
 - Loans
 - Grants
- Expand/Grow a Child Care Business
 - Financial Projections and Modeling
 - Rate Studies
 - Business Plan Consultation
 - Strategic Planning
 - Loans
 - Grants

More Information

- See the [For Businesses page](#) of the First Children's Finance website
- Watch the [Wayfinder First Children's Finance Resource Information Session recording](#)
- See the [First Children's Finance - Business Development – Wayfinder Training Slides](#)

Contact Information

- Toll free: 1-866-562-6801
- Fax: 612-338-4596
- See the [First Children's Finance MN Business Development Team Contact Information](#)

Financial Support: Child and Adult Care Food Programs

Provides payment for meals and snacks served at family child care and child care center. Helps child care programs serve well-balanced, nutritious meals and snacks to kids in care.

Contributes to wellness, healthy growth and development of young children. Provides payments to providers for eligible meals and snacks given to the kids. Provides training to providers.

CCAFP for Family child care

- Reimburses per day per child 12 years of age or younger.
- There are four nonprofit family child care sponsoring organizations that administer CACFP.

CACFP for Child Care Centers

- Children age 0 to 12 in child care centers.
- Children through age 18 in at-risk afterschool programs and emergency shelters.
- Children of migrant workers, through age 15.
- Functionally impaired disabled persons receiving care in a center where most children are 18 years of age and younger.

More Information

- See the [CCAFP page](#) of the MDE website
- See the [CCAFP for Family child care page](#) of the MDE website
- See the [CACFP for Child Care Centers](#) of the MDE website

Financial Support: Child Care Assistance Program

This program provides financial assistance to help families with low incomes pay for child care. To receive this assistance the families will pursue employment or education that will help them find employment. Providers can choose to register to work with this program so families using it can enroll in the providers program. Most providers need to be licensed.

More Information

- See the [CCAP website](#) on the DHS website
- Watch the [Wayfinder Child Care Assistance Program Resource Information Session recording](#)
- See the [Child Care Assistance Program slides](#)
- See the [Receiving Payments from CCAP handout](#)

Contact Information

- Local CCAP agency that registered the provider's program.
- If you don't get the information you need from your child care assistance agency, contact the Minnesota Department of Children, Youth, and Families Child Care Assistance Program Provider Help Line at 651-431-3809 or dcyf.ccap@state.mn.us

Financial Supports: Facility Revitalization Grants

Funding is used for facility improvements, minor renovations, and related equipment and services, including assistance to meet licensing requirements to establish, maintain, or expand licensed and legal unlicensed child care sites.

- Quarterly grant cycles
- Grant funds may not be used for construction or major renovation of facilities.
- Must be a licensed family child care provider, the director or owner of a licensed or certified child care center, a legal, unlicensed provider registered with CCAP, or a new provider seeking licensure.
- Eligible grant requests are items identified by a licensor, fire marshal or health department during the pre-licensure visit and must relate to the facility – not furnishings.
- When a church/synagogue/mosque holds the Child Care Center license, grants may be awarded for health/safety needs only.
- A child care provider that rents space from a church/synagogue/mosque is their own independent business
- Hired labor must be performed by a contractor or individual who performs the type of service for a living, following applicable state and local laws and regulations regarding registration and licensure.
- Providers with more than one setting may submit multiple applications and each application will be evaluated separately.
- All applicants/grantees may submit more than one application over the next two years, however total grant funds awarded may not exceed the total amount allowed by provider type per setting.
- Online application portal: English, Spanish, Hmong, Somali
- For a complete list: www.firstchildrensfinance.org/for-businesses/grants
 - \$100 - \$20,000 Licensed Child Care Centers – Nonprofit and For-profit
 - \$100 - \$15,000 Licensed Family Child Care
 - \$100 - \$10,000 Child Care Centers - Certified
 - \$100 - \$500 Legal, Unlicensed – Registered with CCAP
 - Based on Provider Type – New Start-Up Providers: Application, Background Clearance, Limited to Eligible Needs identified in Pre-Licensure Visit

More Information

- See the [Facility Revitalization Grants page](#) of the First Children's Finance website
- Watch the [6/21/22 Wayfinder Facility Revitalization Grants Resource Information Sessions recording](#)
- See the [Facility Revitalization Grants Handout](#) from Wayfinder training

Contact Information

- Grant Help Line: 612-473-6020
- Email: grants@firstchildrensfinance.org
- Technical Assistance Hours
 - Weekdays 9:00am-4:00pm
 - Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday 6:30-8:30pm during open application period
 - Applicants are encouraged to call the help line for technical assistance.
 - Interpretation services will be available by appointment and can be arranged by sending an email to grants@firstchildrensfinance.org.

Financial Supports: Foreign Credential Evaluation

Early childhood educators from a country other than the U.S. may have education that is not immediately recognized. They can have their education coursework evaluated so they can have it recognized by Achieve. There is a fee to pay for this evaluation. The scholarship will pay for the fee not to exceed \$500.

Applicants must:

- Be working or volunteering in a Minnesota early childhood program.
- Have an employer who has an Organization Account on Develop and who has verified that you are an employee of that organization on their account
- Have a current Develop Individual Membership

More Information

- See the [Foreign Credential Evaluation](#) page on the Child Care Aware of Minnesota website.
- Watch the [6/16/22 Wayfinder Financial Supports Resource Information Session recording \(0:30:30\)](#).

Financial Supports: CDA Financial Assistance

CDA Application Fee Scholarship

The CDA Application Fee Scholarship is for anyone who has not yet applied to the Council for Professional Recognition for their initial CDA or renewal.

- This award is paid directly to The Council to cover a portion of the application fee.
- After notifying the recipient, Child Care Aware of Minnesota will set up a voucher with the Council for Professional Recognition to cover \$300 of the initial CDA application cost and the recipient will pay the difference.
- For renewals, the voucher will cover \$75 of the CDA renewal application cost and the recipient will pay the difference.

- Applicants are limited to receiving funding for one Initial CDA and one renewal.

Applicants may apply for a CDA Application and Training Reimbursement after they've received their CDA.

CDA Application Fee and Training Reimbursement

The CDA Application Fee and Training Reimbursement is for anyone who has received a new CDA certificate within one year of the first day of the application round.

- Reimbursement is paid directly to the awardee.
- The portion of the application fee paid by the awardee (either \$125 or \$425 for an initial CDA, or \$50 or \$125 for a renewal) will be reimbursed.
- Training costs are reimbursed at the rate of \$5 per hour up to a maximum of \$600 for an initial CDA and \$225 for a renewal.

Training that is more than 5 years old cannot be reimbursed. Applicants are limited to receiving funding for one Initial CDA and one renewal.

More Information

- See the [REETAIN Bonuses page](#) on the Child Care Aware of Minnesota website.
- Watch the [6/16/22 Wayfinder Financial Supports Resource Information Session recording \(0:29:10\)](#).

Financial Supports: REETAIN Bonus

The REETAIN bonus is used to help supplement income for early childhood educators as they work to establish a career in the field. Bonuses can be used for program supplies, professional development, or personal expenses. Important details:

- Bonuses range from \$500 - \$3,000 and are based on education and state/federal priorities as funds allow.
- Awardees receive half of their bonuses upon being awarded and half after six months
- Two REETAIN Bonus application periods:
 - Center-based educators from April through May each year
 - Family child care educators from October through November each year

More Information

- See the [REETAIN Bonuses page](#) on the Child Care Aware of Minnesota website.
- Watch the [6/16/22 Wayfinder Financial Supports Resource Information Session recording](#).

Financial Supports: T.E.A.C.H. Scholarship

A T.E.A.C.H. Scholarship will help early childhood and school-age educators increase their levels of education, compensation, and commitment to the field by earning college credits and degrees. Two scholarships:

Early Childhood or School-Age Care Provider Scholarship

- FCC/CCC/School-age staff can receive funding to take credits toward an associate or bachelor's degree in Child Development or Early Childhood Education at an [accredited MN College or University](#).
- Scholarships cover 85% of cost of tuition and books for up to 18 credits a year.
- Recipients also receive a travel stipend and release time.
- Upon successful completion of nine or more credits, recipients may receive a two percent raise (center-based only) and/or a \$250-\$300 bonus.
- Scholarship recipients commit to remaining at their place of employment for at least one year after their scholarship end date.
- Other scholarship options are available for early childhood educators wishing to pursue fewer credits or who choose to complete their CDA trainings at an [approved college or university](#).

Early Childhood Trainer Scholarship

- Achieve Approved Trainers can receive financial assistance to help them increase their Career Lattice Step while they support the early childhood field through quality training.
- Recipients receive a stipend per college course, \$240 per associate level credit and \$440 per bachelor's level credit, and a \$50 bonus for each course completed.
- After the scholarship end date, recipients commit to instructing at least three Achieve-approved trainings within one year.

More Information

- See the [T.E.A.C.H. Scholarship page](#) on the Child Care Aware of Minnesota website.
- Use the [T.E.A.C.H. Cost Calculator](#) to help estimate the expenses and the amount of assistance given.
- Watch the [6/16/22 Wayfinder Financial Supports Resource Information Session recording](#).

Contact Information

- TEACH@childcareawaremn.org

Program Supports: Empower to Educate

Empower to Educate is a statewide program helping current and aspiring early childhood educators begin, advance, and sustain their career goals in child care. Our Workforce Advisors are available to provide one-on-one, individualized support to each participant to ensure we are meeting people where they are. This workforce development program seamlessly combines professional development and wraparound resources in a supportive community. Through connections to financial supports, free training options, job skills training, job placement assistance, and mentorship opportunities, your Workforce Advisor is here to support you every step of the way.

More Information

- See the Empower to Educate page on the Child Care Aware of Minnesota website
- Watch the [6/23/22 Wayfinder Professional Development Resource Information Session recording](#).

Referral Process

- Contact empowertoeducate@childcareawaremn.org

Other Supports: Minnesota Initiative Foundations

Minnesota's six regional initiative foundations work to strengthen the communities and economies of Greater Minnesota including meeting rural community needs.

Northland Foundation

www.northlandfdn.org

218-723-4040

info@northlandfdn.org

Northwest MN Foundation

www.nwmf.org

218-759-2-57 or 800-659-7859

info@nwmf.org

Southern MN Initiative Foundation

www.smifoundation.org

507-455-3215 or 800-590-7759

inquiry@smifoundation.org

Southwest Initiative Foundation

<https://swifoundation.org>

320-587-4848 or 800-587-3838

info@swifoundation.org

West Central Initiative

<https://wcif.org>

218-739-2239 or 800-735-2239

info@wcif.org

Each foundation is independent and serves their assigned geographic region. Services may include grants, business loans, training supports and incentives to support child care providers, as well as collaboration on several statewide initiatives.

More Information

- See the websites of individual Initiative Foundations, which are listed above.
- See the general initiative foundation website: www.ifound.org

Wayfinder Training Materials

History

This initial training for Wayfinder Navigators took place in June 2022 – August 2022. It included four phases, designed to prepare Wayfinder Navigators prior to the July 1st launch of Wayfinder and to provide ongoing support after:

Phase 1 was based on a flexible schedule of training before the week of 6/6. It included required training for Child Care Aware staff as well as background information about the Child Care Aware system, the Wayfinder initiative, and (if needed) child development and early childhood education.

Phase 2 was based on an intensive training schedule over the four weeks leading up to July 1st. It included the following topics:

- Assistance Process Development
- Licensing Process
- Child Care Business Essentials
- Local Strategy
- Marketing, Outreach, and Recruitment
- Case Management
- Resource Information

Phase 3 was based on a flexible schedule of post-launch training over the four weeks after July 1st. It included an introduction to the relationship-based professional development framework and regular opportunities for Wayfinder staff to meet with colleagues working in other service areas to discuss:

- Assistance processes
- Local strategy
- Outreach, recruitment, and marketing
- Resource relationship development

Phase 4 was based on a schedule of ongoing monthly training sessions, learning community meetings, and self-paced training based on each Navigator's training needs and interests, building towards every Navigator attaining Career Lattice Step

5 one year after RBPD endorsement, and Career Lattice Step 6 at their three year RBPD endorsement renewal.

All training materials used during the initial training, including recordings of training sessions, slides, and handouts, are available in the Wayfinder shared drive, which can be accessed at:

<https://sites.google.com/childcareawaremn.org/cca-of-minnesota-intranet/child-care-wayfinder/training>

Training Cost

Several of the self-paced trainings require paying an individual registration fee. These costs are the responsibility of local agencies.

Ongoing Training

Statewide Meetings

- Monthly statewide meetings to give general updates and provide ongoing training on assistance processes, resource and referral relationships, outreach and recruitment, and local strategy.
- Schedule: Fourth Wednesday of each month from 11am to 1pm.

Learning Community Meetings

- Monthly learning community meetings to provide a space for Wayfinder staff to share challenges and successes, collaborate, and learn from each other.
- Schedule: Second Wednesday of each month from 11am to 1pm.

Resource Information Sessions

- Regular resource information sessions to get updates from resource partners and learn about new resources.
- Schedule: As needed

Coordinating Office Check-ins

- One-on-one or small group check-ins with Coordinating Office staff to discuss challenges and successes and plan additional support.
- Schedule: Quarterly

Self-Paced Training

- Ongoing self-paced training based on individual training needs and interests, building towards all Wayfinder staff attaining Career Lattice Step 5 one year after RBPD endorsement, and Career Lattice Step 6 at their three year RBPD

endorsement renewal.

Training Requirements

All Navigators must attain Career Lattice Step 5 one year after RBPB endorsement, and Career Lattice Step 6 at their three year RBPB endorsement renewal.