



2026 Dubuque County Child Care Solutions Grant Guidelines

Guiding Principles

We are excited to introduce year three of the Dubuque County Child Care Solutions Fund. The Community Foundation of Greater Dubuque (CFGD) has assumed responsibility for the fund, taking over from Dubuque Initiatives, which has partnered with Greater Dubuque Development Corp. since the program's launch in December 2023. Together, we can continue making a positive impact on childcare access and quality in our community. Thank you for your dedication to serving families in Dubuque County!

Childcare providers are essential to our community. They serve as teachers, caregivers, a source of nutritious meals, and nurturing environments for children, and they play a critical role in the larger economy through the provision of care options for our working families. The Dubuque County Child Care Solutions Fund Grant is designed to address the growing challenges of childcare wages without significantly increasing the costs of tuition and passing along additional costs to families. This program is supported by CFGD, a 501(C)3 non-profit, through funds received from private sector employers.

To qualify, a program and staff must meet the following requirements:

Program Eligibility

- Located in Dubuque County, or within the city limits of Cascade and Dyersville
- Full license with the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services
- Quality rated (IQ4K) or NAEYC accredited programs may receive priority
- Have a current Child Care Assistance (CCA) agreement with the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services
- Provide a W9
- Agree to provide information as requested for compliance with the Child Care Solutions Fund grant

Staff Eligibility

- Consistently scheduled to work a minimum of 20 hours per week
- Work year-round (not temporary or seasonal)
- Provide direct care to children
- Owners of the center businesses are not eligible

Grant Timeline:

- Application Period: November 1, 2025 – December 1, 2025
- Funding Period: January 2026

Applying for a Grant – All applications are submitted online through the Community Foundation's grant system, please visit: <https://goapply2.akoyago.com/dubuque/application/child-care-solutions-2026>

Funding Request Areas

Please apply for all the funding request area(s) that best align with your center's focus:

- **Wage Support Supplement**
 - Financial support may be used to increase wages and ensure child care positions remain competitive in the job market. For example, a center could request a one-time grant of up to \$1,000 per full-time employee and up to \$500 per part-time employee to provide incentive-based bonuses, as determined by the director, to help retain qualified professionals. Executive directors may be included in this funding; however, owners are not eligible. Please note that temporary or seasonal employees are not eligible for this funding.
- **HHS Required Costs**
 - \$145 per employee to cover state-required costs for childcare professionals. This includes expenses such as background checks (\$15), CPR/First Aid training (\$65), and Child Care Provider Physical Examinations (\$65). These requirements apply to both new hires and ongoing staff to ensure compliance and safety in the classroom.
- **Professional Development & Technology Upgrades**
 - Financial support is available to offset costs associated with HHS-approved professional development activities and center-wide technology upgrades. Awards up to \$5,000.
- **AccessDubuqueJobs.com investment**
 - The annual rate for Childcare Centers shall be determined based on the number of Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) employees as outlined in the [AccessDubuqueJobs.com Rate Card](#). For organizations that operate multiple service lines beyond childcare, only FTEs directly associated with the childcare program shall be included when determining the applicable rate.
 - In addition, Greater Dubuque Development Corporation will provide additional marketing support through AccessDubuqueJobs.com to promote childcare career opportunities and strengthen this essential workforce.

Equity Statement

The Community Foundation of Greater Dubuque believes all people should be valued, respected, and provided equal opportunity. CFGD does not discriminate based on race, color, creed, sex, religion, familial status, age, national origin or ancestry, citizenship status, physical or mental disability, medical condition, genetic information, gender identity, sexual orientation, military status, or any other consideration made unlawful by federal, state, or local laws. This policy applies to all activities at the CFGD, including but not limited to employment, volunteer recruitment, grantmaking, selection of vendors, and use of our facilities. CFGD does not knowingly partner with individuals or organizations whose programs, services, employment, or volunteer opportunities do not comply with our policy.

Questions?

Contact Gretchen Corcoran at 563-588-2700 or gretchen@dbqfoundation.org

Collaborative Feedback

We value your insights! As part of this program, we encourage childcare providers to share additional ideas for impactful recruitment strategies.