



Children & Families First

Capacity Grant Guidelines

(Effective March 15, 2021)

If you are interested in applying for the Capacity Grant, please review these Capacity Grant Guidelines in their entirety.

Capacity Grant application deadline dates and materials are located on the Children & Families First website: www.cffde.org

Application steps are explained in Section #8 of these Guidelines.

If you have any questions when compiling your application, please contact Program Manager, Andrea Prettyman at (302) 233-645 or email: andrea.prettyman@cffde.org

Thank you for investing your time into quality improvement efforts through the Capacity Grant!

Section 1: Introduction and Targeted Funding Categories

The Capacity Grant Program is managed by Children & Families First, through a contract overseen by the Delaware Department of Education. The grant monies come to Delaware through the federal Child Development Block Grant. The Capacity Grant awards are intended to provide quality improvement technical assistance strategies and grant resources to licensed child care programs that meet certain criteria outlined in this document. **The Capacity Grant awards must enhance the quality of care in programs, and/or build the supply of quality child care that is in limited supply in one or all of the following “target” areas:**

- Children who need care during **non-traditional hours** (defined as care provided during at least one of the following time blocks: 1) a minimum of one hour prior to 7:00 a.m., and/or 2) a minimum of one hour after 6:00 p.m., and/or 3) care needed on weekends);
- Children who are **English language learners**;
- Children with **special needs** (defined as children with an IFSP, IEP, 504, or behavioral or mental health plan as outlined by a specialist);
- **Infants and toddlers** (defined as birth up to 36 months).

Section 2: Eligibility Requirements—Mandatory Criteria

The Capacity Grant is available to licensed child care programs throughout the state of Delaware. The grant has a particular emphasis on serving children from low-income families in identified high needs areas. In order to be considered for funding, child care programs:

- Must have a **valid annual license** issued by the Office of Child Care Licensing with no current enforcement actions.
- Must **accept Purchase of Care (POC)** through a contract with the Division of Social Services and must **meet certain POC percentage enrollment criteria**. Refer to Section #3 for stipulations about POC enrollment as a percentage of overall enrollment.

- Must be **enrolled in the Delaware Stars Program or Bridge to Stars and engaged in quality improvement efforts**, prior to receiving grant resources. Engagement must be Star-Level appropriate per Delaware Stars Letter of Expectations and Partnership Agreements.
- **Must not have been approved for Capacity Grant funds within the prior 24 months** (time period is calculated based on Advisory Committee approval dates)—check with Capacity Grant Program Manager or TA if you need to have this date confirmed before you apply.
- Must be in **good standing with POC, Delaware Stars and other Capacity Grant partners such as CACFP if you participate in services with other agencies**.
 - Standings reports are gathered by Capacity Grant staff from all involved partner agencies. Poor standings can result in deferral or denial of the Capacity Grant application.
- If applying for funding in the target area of “children with special needs,” must **have current IEP, IFSP, 504 or behavioral or mental health plan on file**, and must **link funding request to materials or services needed to enhance the accommodations** of children enrolled with identified special needs.

Section 3: POC Enrollment Criteria and High Needs Areas

The Capacity Grant project seeks to expand or enhance care that is safe, healthy, and appropriate, with an emphasis on serving children from low-income families in identified high needs areas.

Programs must accept POC and have one or more children enrolled who are POC recipients. Programs accepting only POC+ will not meet this criteria. POC enrollment data must be entered on the application and verified by a Capacity Grant Technical Assistant prior to award of grant funding if application is approved.

Programs located in a designated high needs area will receive a higher rubric rating during the application approval process. High needs areas are identified as follows:

- Wilmington River Area, Center City of Wilmington, Western Wilmington (zip codes including: 19703, 19801, 19802, 19803, 19804, parts of 19805, 19806 and 19809)
- Southern Dover (zip codes including: parts of 19901, 19904 and 19934)
- Southern Kent/Northern Sussex (zip codes including: 19933, 19941, 19950, 19952, 19954, 19960, 19963, 19946, and parts of 19943 and 19968)
- Georgetown area (zip codes including parts of 19947 and 19966)
- Western Sussex (zip codes including: 19973, 19931, 19956, 19940, 19945, and parts of 19945 and 19966)
- Eastern Sussex (zip codes including: 19945, 19975, 19967 19944, 19970, 19939, and parts of 19966)

**Based on availability of funding, and certain unique circumstances (such as the COVID-19 pandemic) the criteria relating to POC enrollment and high needs areas may be adjusted by the Capacity Grant Advisory Committee.

Section 4: Funding Priority

In addition to the criteria noted in Sections 1-3, the overall composition of the applicant pool for a particular application “round” is also taken into account as funding decisions are made, with the following factors examined by the Capacity Grant Advisory Committee:

- **High Needs areas and POC enrollment**: Programs serving the highest percentage of POC-enrolled children, and located in identified high needs areas will receive higher priority (see Section #3 for details).
- **Targeted funding categories**: In order to ensure an equitable distribution of funds across all target areas (Non-traditional hours, English Language Learners, Children with Special Needs, and Infants and Toddlers) and throughout the State, some applications may be deferred for future application rounds.
- **Star Level with Delaware Stars**: Programs at lower Star Levels may receive higher priority, with the other priority areas and criteria also being considered.

Section 5: Funding Award Amounts and Examples of Materials/Resources to Consider

Award amounts for the spring 2021 round will be determined based on composition of the application pool. Award amounts in any particular application round are based on factors including program type, enrollment numbers and availability of overall Capacity Grant funds. Programs should contact their Capacity Grant TA or the Program Manager with specific questions about the potential funding amount for their program.

The Capacity Grant will only be awarded to programs where the funds are essential to improve quality and increase or enhance availability of care in at least one of the four target areas identified in Section #1. Materials and other resources provided to programs will be required to meet Delaware Stars Standards.

Examples of **materials** that will be considered under the grant:

- Classroom furnishings:
 - Example: child accessible cubbies, low shelving units, appropriate child-sized tables and chairs, cribs, high chairs, changing tables
- Curriculum, assessment or developmental screening components/kits (approved through Delaware Stars/OEL)
- Educational materials:
 - Example: books, blocks, block accessory sets, materials to enhance learning in math, science, language arts, sand & water play, music, movement and other educational materials tied to the ERS standards
- Adult furniture for routine care
 - Example: feeding chair, gliders, rocking chair
- Technology for **teacher's use**
 - Example: computer, camera, printer
- Soft equipment for the physical environment which could be used by all children, including children who have special needs
- Toys and materials that would encourage inclusion for children with special needs and/or address specific areas of an IEP, IFSP, 504, or behavioral or mental health plan
- Outdoor play equipment that does not need to be anchored

Examples of **professional development** that will be considered under the grant:

- Professional development that is quality assured through DIEEC (Delaware Institute for Excellence in Early Childhood)
- TECE 1 & 2; online CDA training
- College credits in alignment with qualifications through the Office of Childcare Licensing and/or in alignment with credentials through DIEEC

Examples of **other uses** for funds:

- Services that will improve efficiency in operations
- Short-term therapy for children

Examples of materials that **will NOT** be considered under the grant:

- Items that will confine a child, or not encourage active engagement (e.g.-swings, strollers, bucket-seat tables, bouncy seats, etc.)
- Adult furniture not intended for use during routine care of children, such as desks and chairs
- Consumables (e.g.-craft/art materials, food, cleaning supplies, office consumables such as copy paper)
- Construction
- Outdoor surfacing, poured-in-place, mulch

Section 6: Technical Assistance

Technical assistance (TA) by one of our Capacity Grant TAs is highly recommended PRIOR to submitting the application, in order to support a program throughout their application process. Programs should contact the Capacity Grant Program Manager to make arrangements for TA support prior to submitting their application.

Each program that submits an application will be assigned a Capacity Grant Technical Assistant (TA). All programs submitting an application are required to participate in site visits (virtual visit during Covid-19 pandemic) and a “needs assessment” by a Capacity Grant Technical Assistant prior to the final award decision. The needs assessment will also include input and collaboration with the program’s Delaware Stars TA. The needs assessment will enable the Capacity Grant TA to support the program in determining appropriate resources to request, which will ultimately be placed on a “Resource Request List” for consideration by the Capacity Grant Advisory Committee.

The frequency and length of each TA visit (involving the Capacity Grant TA) will vary based on the need(s) being addressed. Technical assistance may be offered in areas such as (but not limited to): support with completion of application documents; needs assessment; inventorying of new materials; support with planning around administrative policies, general business management, staff retention and performance management; classroom management.

Section 7: Selection & Award Process

Grant awards will be considered for approval, and final decisions made, by the Capacity Grant Advisory Committee led by Children & Families First and the Department of Education. The committee is comprised of stakeholders and partners from the early childhood community. The approval process involves the use of a rubric rating of the level at which the applying program meets the criteria outlined in these Guidelines. Selection and approval for grant funding will be based on the requirements and priorities outlined in Section 1 through 5, as well as:

- Availability of funding
- Determination at “needs assessment” visit (virtual visit during Covid-19 pandemic) by a Capacity Grant TA. All programs will receive a “needs assessment” visit prior to the final award decision.

Section 8: Application Packet, Deadline & Submission Process

**Application deadlines are posted on the Children & Families First website: www.cffde.org

Applications must be **received by CFF no later than the TIME and DATE posted on the website.

**Application Packet documents are also located on the website.

**Meeting these application submission steps does not automatically ensure the approval of the application.

Your Application Packet must include:

- Capacity Application (a fillable PDF)
- Application Supplement: Proposal Narrative & Budget Summary

To submit the Application Packet:

- 1) Save a copy of your Application Packet documents onto your device, titled with your program’s name and the name of each document (i.e. “ABC Child Care-Capacity Grant application” and “ABC Child Care-Capacity Grant application supplement”)
- 2) Submit your Application Packet (all documents listed above) in one of the following ways:
 - Email to: andrea.prettyman@cffde.org (include the title of your application packet in the subject line of the email: i.e. “ABC Child Care-Capacity Grant Application Packet”)
 - OR
 - Fax to: (855) 295-5331
 - Do not mail your Application Packet to our offices as staff are working remotely.

Remember--Capacity Grant Technical Assistants (TAs) are available to support you with the completion of your application packet. (see Section #6 for further details on TA support)

- For multiple program sites, one application per site is required.
- Applications that are incomplete or incorrectly filled out will be returned to the applicant and may be re-submitted before the deadline.
- Children & Families First may request clarification and/or further information from the program.
- Amendments to posted deadlines may occur due to unforeseen circumstances, and will be communicated as efficiently as possible to potential applicants.

Contact the Capacity Grant Program Manager with questions:

Andrea Prettyman

(302) 233-6475 andrea.prettyman@cffde.org