



CHILD CARE ZONES

2025 APPLICATION GUIDANCE

March 13, 2025

Kansas Department of Health and Environment

[Technical Assistance Request Form](#)

[Letter of Interest Submission Form](#)

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Funding Opportunity

The Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) announces the Child Care Zones program. A Child Care Zone is a self-defined geographic area that receives state-level support to address child care challenges in the region. Each Child Care Zone will determine its own priorities and package of support needed to address longstanding challenges and acute needs of both the child care workforce and families needing care.

Goals

- Address community-defined child care needs for workforce and families
- Strengthen local child care ecosystems to address child care needs long-term
- Identify shared learning opportunities for unique child care approaches to support all Kansas communities

Timeline

- January 27, 2025: [Informational Webinars](#) – Webinar 1 (11:00 am – 12:30 pm) and Webinar 2 (6:30 – 8:00 pm)
- February 3, 2025: Release of Application Guidance
- February 3 – August 18, 2025: Technical Assistance Available
- February 28, 2025: Letters of Interest Due
 - Please [upload your Letter of Interest online](#) by 5:00 pm on February 28, 2025. There is not a required template for these letters.
- March 3 – March 14, 2025: Interviews with Prospective Applicants
- April 7, 2025 (by 5:00 pm): Applications Due (Round One – Applicants must be invited to apply)
- Week of April 21, 2025: Announce First Round of Grant Awards
- August 25, 2025 (by 5:00 pm): Applications Due (Round Two – Any interested group may apply)
- Week of September 15, 2025: Announce Second Round Grant Awards

Overview

Eligible Applicants

Child Care Zones are formed by communities through partnerships between **two or more counties** and may involve:

- Licensed child care facilities
- Family Resource Centers
- Unified School Districts
- Community foundations
- 501c3 organizations
- Community-based organizations and libraries
- Head start programs
- Community coalitions with one partner designated as fiscal agent
- County and city governments
- Local employers

Key Definitions

- Licensed Child Care is defined as child care facilities, both home-based and center-based, licensed by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment who serve children from birth through age five.

Measuring Success

These awards are designed to support a broad range of partners as they address the unique needs of families and providers in their communities. Grantees will identify significant challenges in their area, generate and test new approaches, and share lessons learned.

While individual grantee outcomes will look different across the state, the overall impact will be a stronger statewide early childhood care and education system. Understanding what success looks like to each applicant is key to testing these locally-driven approaches and scaling what works. **If awarded, grantees will work with KDHE to identify specific measures to determine the impact and strategies throughout the grant period. Applicants should explain the impact they hope to have as a result of their proposed strategies in their narrative.**

Alignment with *All in for Kansas Kids* Efforts

Collaboration among Kansas state agencies, early childhood champions, and thousands of Kansans' input led to the development of the *All in for Kansas Kids* 2024 [Needs Assessment](#) and [Strategic Plan](#). These two documents present key findings around needs and outline specific goals across three pillars to help guide the next several years of early childhood efforts in Kansas. The Child Care Zones are one of many tactics to address needs, improve quality, strengthen collaboration, and ensure every child thrives in Kansas.

Applicants are encouraged to review and reference both documents when developing local approaches to meet the needs of young children and families.

Applicants should also consider how their approach and strategies can be informed by the lived experiences of Kansans in their region or community. Regional reports from the stories of more than 2,200 Kansans highlighting both unique needs and local solutions are included as Appendix F in the back of the *All in for Kansas Kids* 2019 [Needs Assessment](#).

Keys to Successful Grant Submissions

KDHE will support locally-driven approaches that help meet community-defined child care needs through investment in building and/or strengthening ecosystems.

Successful proposals will include one or more of the following:

- Collaborative approach with partners across a minimum of two or more counties
- Strong understanding of local child care needs that have been informed by local child care providers and families with young children
- Strategies to build new and/or strengthen existing ecosystems to support child care needs such as a local coalition with key champions, dedicated personnel for efforts, model for supporting local child care providers, etc.
- Strategies that incorporate strong family and child care providers engagement or family voice and choice efforts
- Documented community partnerships and a collaborative approach
- Clearly articulated vision for how strategies will address local child care needs and be sustained

Child Care Zone Details

Overview

The Child Care Zones pilot program will invest in communities to help local leaders and members of the child care sector address barriers, grow awareness of needs and challenges, recover from shortages and setbacks, and make sustainable system improvements.

Eligibility Information and Considerations

- Eligible applicants may include but are not limited to licensed child care providers, non-profits, community-based organizations and libraries, economic development entities, county or city governments, university partners, and/or community coalitions with demonstrated partnerships and connections to center-based and/or family-based child care providers.
- Projects must support a minimum of two full Kansas counties.
- Child Care Zones are meant to support a community's needs across the child care sector and are not intended for a single facility or organization.
- Projects may support any type of licensed child care for children birth through five.
- Applications must include a 25% match to be eligible. Match can include in-kind.

Example Strategies and Activities

(example strategies should not be considered required details – they are simply meant to generate ideas that applicants might use with staff, partners, and families during proposal development)

- Child care provider wage adjustments
- Benefit packages such as paid leave or health insurance support
- Formation of substitute care pools
- Professional development opportunities
- Administrative support including shared services like accounting, HR functions or support with child care subsidy or Child and Adult Care Food Program
- Provider recruitment and retention strategies

- Mentorship, peer support or business succession planning
- Consultation and technical support

Award Information

Source of Funding

The Child Care Zones are made possible through a federal *Preschool Development Birth Through Five Renewal Grant* issued to the Kansas Children’s Cabinet and Trust Fund in 2024. Awards are subject to the availability of funds and any modifications required by the Kansas Children’s Cabinet and Trust Fund.

Number and Amount of Awards

The number of awards issued is not pre-determined. Awards will be allocated based on the quantity and quality of proposals received. KDHE reserves the right to reject any proposals that are incomplete or non-responsive to these Application Guidelines and to award grants based on available funding.

The maximum award per grant year will be \$250,000 per grantee. Project budgets submitted by applicants should be reasonable for the population to be served and strategies proposed.

Award Length

Child Care Zones will be awarded to successful applicants for one grant year at a time with continuation awards planned for additional grant years. Funding is contingent upon federal appropriations of PDG-R and is not guaranteed for multiple years. Awards will align with the PDG-R funding cycle ending in 2027, as outlined below:

- Year One: May 1, 2025 through September 29, 2025 (for grantees awarded in Round One)
- Year Two: September 30, 2025 through September 29, 2026 (grantees awarded in Round Two will start in September 2025)
- Year Three: September 30, 2026 – August 1, 2027

Ineligible Use of Funds

Child Care Zones may not be expended for:

- Purchase of land, buildings or vehicles
- Construction, capital improvements or capital expenditures
- Food or beverage
- Supplanting for personnel

Indirect costs must comply with 45 CFR § 75.414. Allowable indirect costs (as defined in OMB Circular A-122) will be limited to 10%.

If you have any questions about allowable use of funds please reach out for Technical Assistance.

KDHE may audit grants at any point to ensure that funds are being spent in accordance with the OMB circular and the approved grant proposal.

Application Process and Requirements

How to Apply

Applications must be submitted online with all required documentation using the [Kansas Grant Management System portal](#) no later than 5:00 p.m. CST on April 7, 2025 (Round One) and August 25, 2025 (Round Two). Prospective applicants will be able to log into the system in early March. The application components are laid out below for review.

Applications will be reviewed independently by a panel of early childhood care and education stakeholders. A total of 100 points will be available based on the Selection Criteria below.

Failure to submit an application that contains all of the specified information may negatively affect the review of the application, preclude access to or use of award funds pending satisfaction of the conditions, and/or prevent the application from proceeding to the KDHE Grant Review Team for further consideration.

Contact Information

Applicants will provide contact information for organization and project lead, as well as type of entity.

Project Abstract

- A project abstract is a brief overview of your project or program and key partners. This information may be used for summary documents of grants submitted and/or for public notifications of awards. (150 word limit)

Description of Need

- Describe in detail the local child care needs you will address through the Child Care Zone and why you are prioritizing them. Please provide an explanation of data sources used to determine these needs and describe how your proposed approach will address these needs.
 - Resource: Applicants are expected to cite recent data that shows understanding of local child care needs. If you do not have recent data, it is strongly recommended that you prioritize that prior to submitting your

application. A [customizable survey template](#) is available for applicants to customize and distribute to help inform your application.

Project Overview

- **Project Overview**

- **Strategies and Activities:** Describe all strategies and key activities to complete the project. If you have tried these approaches in the past, what would be different with this funding and why?
- **Impact:** What is the long-term impact you hope these strategies and activities will have on addressing local child care needs? Please include an estimated number of child care providers you will support through the Child Care Zones and the types of providers (e.g. center-based). Please discuss how your projected impact will impact local child care needs (e.g. increase local workforce by X%, increase local child care funding by X%).
- **Population and Geographic Reach:** Describe the population to be impacted by the project. Specify how your project will directly support child care providers, including the types of child care settings (e.g. center-based, home-based). Describe the geographic area you will serve with your project. Projects must serve at least two full Kansas counties.
- **Outreach Strategies:** Describe the outreach strategies you will employ to ensure community engagement with your project. Specify how you will engage with local families and child care providers.
- **Barriers:** Describe any potential barriers you have identified to implementing your project. Please then discuss planned strategies you have to overcome those barriers.
- **Partnerships:** List all project partners and their roles. Describe how you determined this collaboration and how you will work together to achieve project goals. If there are additional partners you would like to involve during the project period, please include them.

Project Timeline

- Provide the estimated project timeline from beginning to project completion. Make sure to indicate key milestones in your project timeline.

Sustainability Plan

- Describe any sustainability plans you have in place for this project. If you do not currently have sustainability plans, explain how you will develop them. It is expected that all grantees will have a plan to sustain at least 50% of Zone activities at the end of the grant period. Grantees will be expected to submit sustainability plan by end of Year 2 (September 2026).

Budget and Budget Narrative

- Applicants must include a budget for each grant year they are requesting funding.
- Ineligible expenses include construction and permanent renovations or installations, wage supplanting, and food and beverage.
- **Applicants must include a 25% match to be eligible. Match can include in-kind.**

Letters of Support (optional)

Applicants can include up to three letters of support they feel would strengthen consideration of their application.

Additional Documentation (optional)

Applicants can include additional documentation of local child care needs and/or recent efforts such as early childhood strategic plan, needs assessment, etc.

Technical Assistance, Review, and Selection Process

Technical Assistance

KDHE is committed to supporting equitable access to Child Care Zone funding and has developed ways to help applicants and grantees. The purpose of this technical assistance is three-fold:

1. To build skills and capacity for grant-writing among Kansas organizations and entities,
2. Provide support in making connections or translating good ideas to grant proposal language, and
3. Provide assistance in identifying sources of supporting data on need.

Technical assistance includes the following:

- Informational Webinars – January 27, 2025
- One-on-one technical assistance calls, as requested by applicant
- Online repository of resources to help with research and need data
- Post-award peer learning calls for grantees
- Post-award one-on-one technical assistance calls as requested or as needed in response to quarterly grantee report information

How to Request Technical Assistance

All questions and requests for technical assistance must be [submitted online](#) between February 3 and August 18, 2025. The Child Care Zone technical assistance team will respond directly to individuals as quickly as possible via email, with follow-up phone calls as needed. Information from technical assistance conversations may be used to populate additional applicant and grantee resources to ensure shared learning.

Proposal Review

KDHE is committed to ensuring a fair process for awarding grants. Eligible applications will be evaluated, scored, and rated by impartial and diverse representatives from the Kansas early childhood care and education system. Funding recommendations will be provided to the State Director Team leadership for final approval. The State Director Team includes early childhood leaders from the Kansas Department of Health and Environment, the Kansas Department for Children and Families, the Kansas Children’s Cabinet and Trust Fund, and the Kansas State Department of Education. KDHE reserves the right to work with applicants and grantees post-submission to modify proposals as deemed necessary.

Selection Criteria

Evaluators will use a scoring rubric to review proposals. A maximum of **100 points** is possible. The following table is representative of the order in which the proposal will be organized. In addition, applications will be considered ‘incomplete’ and not scored at all if they are missing applicable and required attachment documents. Scores assigned to proposal components are as follows:

Section	Points
Project Abstract	3 points
Description of Need	15 points
Project Overview	50 points
Project Timeline	7 points
Sustainability Plan	15 points
Budget and Budget Narrative	10 points
Total Maximum Proposal Points	100 points

Child Care Zone Monitoring and Reporting

The purpose of monitoring is to support grantees in their Child Care Zone implementation efforts; ensure children, families, and communities are being served as intended; and elevate opportunities for shared learning and project scaling across the Kansas early childhood care and education system.

Quarterly Reporting

KDHE will monitor Child Care Zone progress quarterly and provide technical assistance to support grantees with project implementation.

- Grantees will be expected to complete a quarterly report that addresses Child Care Zone spending progress, any challenges and/or bright spots and technical assistance needs.
- Depending on quarterly report progress, grantees may be asked to participate in technical assistance and/or adjust project strategies and implementation efforts.

Financial Reporting

Program reporting includes a monthly financial report. Invoices can be submitted for reimbursement monthly. By the 10th of each month the grantee will submit a monthly grant transaction report for payment via email.

Ongoing Audit Requirements

Transmittal Letter for Audit, Form 990, or most recent Year-end Financial Statement Insert, or any other audit requirements, as needed and requested by KDHE.

Assurances and Certifications

Supplanting of Grant Funds

The grantee shall not replace or supplant funding of another existing program with funds provided for in this Grant. Funds awarded under this Agreement may not be used for any purpose other than the one defined in this document.

Debarment

As part of the Code of Federal Regulations (45 C.F.R. Part 76), all governmental entities receiving funding from the Federal Government must participate in a government wide system for non-procurement debarment and suspension. A person or entity that is debarred or suspended shall be excluded from Federal financial and non-financial assistance and benefits under Federal programs and activities. Debarment or suspension of a participant in a program by one agency shall have government wide effect. The Deputy Commissioner of Education is authorized to impose debarment. Before any person or entity enters into an agreement, grant or contract with KCCTF, the [Excluded Parties Lists](#) shall be researched for potential debarred persons or entities.

Compliance with Laws and Regulations

The Grantee agrees that it will comply with all federal, state, and local laws and regulations in effect at any time during the course of this Grant. The Grantee shall certify to the KCCTF Executive Director that it will provide a drug-free workplace and as a condition of the Grant, the Grantee will not

engage in the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession or use of a controlled substance in conducting any activity with the Grant.

Nondiscrimination and Workplace Safety

The grantee agrees to abide by all state, federal and local laws, rules and regulations prohibiting discrimination in employment and controlling workplace safety. Any violation of applicable laws, rules and regulations may result in termination of this Grant.

ADA Compliance

The contractor agrees: (a) to comply with the Kansas Act Against Discrimination (K.S.A. 44-1001 et. seq.) and the Kansas Age Discrimination in Employment Act (K.S.A. 44-111 et seq.) and the applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (42 U.S.C. 12101 et. seq.) (ADA) and to not discriminate against any person because of race, religion, color, sex, disability, national origin or ancestry, or age in the admission or access to, or treatment or employment in, its programs or activities; (b) to include in all solicitations or advertisements for employees, the phrase "Equal Opportunity Employer"; (c) to comply with the reporting requirements set out at K.S.A. 44-1031 and K.S.A. 44-1116; (d) to include those provisions in every subcontract or purchase order so that they are binding upon such subcontractor or vendor; (e) that a failure to comply with the reporting requirements of (c) above or if the contractor is found guilty of any violation of such acts by the Kansas Human Rights Commission, such violation shall constitute a breach of contract and the contract may be cancelled, terminated or suspended, in whole or in part, by the contracting state agency or the Kansas Department of Administration; (f) if it is determined that the contractor has violated applicable provisions of ADA, such violation shall constitute a breach of contract and the contract may be cancelled, terminated or suspended, in whole or in part, by the contracting state agency or the Kansas Department of Administration.

Parties to this contract understand that the provisions of this paragraph (with the exception of those provisions relating to the ADA) are not applicable to a contractor who employs fewer than four employees during the term of such contract or whose contracts with the contracting state agency cumulatively total \$5,000 or less during the fiscal year of such agency.

Audit Requirements

Awards containing Federal funds are subject to the Audit Requirements listed in OMB Circular A-133. Per CFR200.501 any non-federal entity that expends \$1,000,000 or more must have a single or program specific audit conducted of that year in accordance with the provisions of 200.501. Organizations spending less than \$500,000 annually in Federal awards may be subject to other audit requirements which will be established at the time of the award.

Cost Principles

PDG B-5 Renewal grant awards are subject to the requirements of Every Student Succeeds Act, Section 9212; the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for HHS Awards – 45 CFR Part 75; the HHS Grants Policy Statement; and any specific terms and

conditions noted on the award or by attachment to the award.

Funds awarded through this agreement are subject to the following requirements as established by the Office of Management and Budget:

- OMB Circular A-102 – Grants and Cooperative Agreements with State and Local Governments
- OMB Circular A-110 – Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Other Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education and Other Non-Profit Organizations
- OMB Circular A-21 – Cost Principles for Educational Institutions
- OMB Circular A-87 – Cost Principles for State, Local and Indian Tribe Governments
- OMB Circular A-122 – Cost Principles for Non-Profit Organizations