**Minnesota Rural Child Care Innovation Program Application**

Child care is an economic driver for rural communities across the United States but many communities are facing shortages of high quality child care. First Children’s Finance’s Rural Child Care Innovation Program (RCCIP) is a community engagement process designed to address the challenges of child care in rural America.

The Rural Child Care Innovation Program is based on the fundamental idea that rural communities are greater than their size in numbers and greater than their current challenges. By mobilizing and empowering rural communities, the landscape of early care and education is changing in rural America.

Rural Minnesota communities are invited to submit an application for the 2020 cohort. Applications will be accepted until October 6th, 2020 at 5:00 PM CST. While many communities have child care shortages, only some are ready to roll up their sleeves and embark on the journey to address this critical community issue. Through this competitive process, First Children’s Finance will select communities who demonstrate commitment to the community engagement process over an 18-24 month period.

Historically all RCCIP activities have been held in-person. With the pandemic we have developed systems to adapt the RCCIP process so it can be done in-person, virtually or a combination of both. Decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis by the core team lead and First Children’s Finance staff depending upon regulations and the current situation with the pandemic.

**Consider attending the information webinar on September 15th 1:30-2pm to learn more about the program and the benefits to participating communities:**

**To log in, please visit:** [**RCCIP Application Webinar**](https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/7571919175146868751)

*All applications are due by 5:00 PM on* October 6th, 2020*.*

*Communities selected to participate will be notified by* October 20th, 2020 via e-mail*.*

If you have additional questions during the application process, please contact Jessica Beyer at

320-808-7066 or [Jessica@firstchildrensfinance.org](mailto:Jessica@firstchildrensfinance.org)

**Minnesota Rural Child Care Innovation Program Application**

**Narrative**

**INSTRUCTIONS:** To enter responses, place your cursor over the box and click once to select that field, or use the tab key to move to the next question (Tip: Ctrl + Tab will move you back to the previous question). The boxes will expand as you type.

1. Describe your community, including a definition of what geographic area(s) will be included.

* *Applicants can include clusters of cities and towns as a community*
* *The proposed community can be no larger than a county*
* *The 9-county Twin Cities metro area, Fargo-Moorhead metro area, Duluth, Rochester and St. Cloud area are excluded as applicants*
* *If a population center is proposed, applicants must include the surrounding rural areas in their definition of the community*
* *Preference is given to truly rural communities*

1. Why does your community need to address child care? Identify the challenges your community is facing. Include demographic information, survey results or local studies your community has used to identify the local child care issue. Describe the number of child care slots available in your community, and factors that may be impacting the availability of child care.

1. How is the local economy impacting child care, and how is child care impacting the local economy?

1. What steps has your community already taken to address the child care challenge you described above?

1. Describe how your community has worked together in the past to solve other community challenges. Examples can be general, and do not need to be directly related to child care.

1. How has the current COVID-19 pandemic affected child care in your community?

1. Describe what your community would like to gain out of this process?

1. What resources (financial, in-kind, etc.) does your community have available to implement potential child care solutions?

**Main Contact and Core Team**

The RCCIP is a community engagement process that increases the capacity of local leaders to implement child care solutions. The local Core Team will be highly engaged in the entire RCCIP process for approximately 18-24 months, and therefore, should represent diverse perspectives. Core Team members should be leaders committed to **actively** participating in the community engagement process. Applicants are encouraged to create Core Teams with representation from the following sectors:

* economic development
* city or county government (administrators or elected officials)
* representatives of local employers
* child care licensing or the county Child Care Assistance Program
* local philanthropy
* community leaders and influencers

**Due to COVID-19 social distancing practices and the potential need to meet virtually, Core Teams should have 1 primary contact (Core Team Lead), 10 Core Team Members and up to 3 alternate members if initial members are unable to fulfil their duties.**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Core Team Lead** |  | **Email** |  |
| **Title, Organization** |  | **Phone Number** |  |
| **Mailing Address** |  | | |

Identify the main contact responsible (Core Team Lead) for communicating with First Children’s Finance regarding this application.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Core Team Members | Title, Organization | Mailing Address | Phone | Email |
| 1 |  |  |  |  |
| 2 |  |  |  |  |
| 3 |  |  |  |  |
| 4 |  |  |  |  |
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| 10 |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Alternates |  |  |  |  |
| 1 |  |  |  |  |
| 2 |  |  |  |  |
| 3 |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |

1. Describe how members of the core team are currently involved in the community.

1. How will the Core Team engage a variety of community members to participate in the planning process and community events to develop child care solutions?

1. Describe strategies the Core Team will use to recruit participants in the overall solution implementation.

1. Have you reviewed the core team commitments with each proposed member to ensure their full engagement over the next 24 months?

**Signature**

By signing this application, I acknowledge I have been authorized to submit my community for consideration as an applicant for the Rural Child Care Innovation Program. I acknowledge the individuals listed on the Core Team roster have agreed to participate in the community engagement process.

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Main Contact (Core Team Lead) Signature Date

**Deadline**

Applications must be submitted by *5:00 PM on* October 6th, 2020.

Completed applications should be emailed to Jessica Beyer, First Children’s Finance: [jessica@firstchildrensfinance.org](mailto:jessica@firstchildrensfinance.org)

If you are having difficulties viewing this document please contact First Children’s Finance, Jessica Beyer at [jessica@firstchildrensfinance.org](mailto:jessica@firstchildrensfinance.org)