



## ECIC Child Care Innovation Fund Competitive Funding Opportunity

### Family Child Care Networks

### Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

If you have any additional questions or inquiries, please contact [technicalassistance@ecic4kids.org](mailto:technicalassistance@ecic4kids.org).

#### Eligibility

#### 1. Are child care providers eligible subrecipients?

This funding opportunity will not award *individual* child care providers or businesses. A **group** of home-based child care providers could seek a fiscal sponsor ([see below and in the RFP on page 5](#)) who would agree to be the applicant organization, and if selected, the subrecipient. The fiscal sponsor would be accountable to ECIC's Child Care Innovation Fund for the programmatic and financial outcomes for Family Child Care Networks as defined and explained in the RFP.

No individual child care programs, including family and group child care homes, are eligible to apply for this opportunity. These funds can **only** be used to implement Family Child Care Networks as defined and explained in the RFP.

#### 2. Who is an eligible subrecipient?

To be eligible for funding, the applicant must meet the IRS definition of a non-profit (not limited to 501(c)3).

Applicants, such as a **group** of home-based child care providers, may utilize a fiscal sponsor for the purposes of this funding opportunity. A fiscal sponsor is responsible for all legal aspects of an organization or project. The fiscal sponsor is considered the subrecipient and agrees to be accountable to ECIC's Child Care Innovation Fund for the programmatic and financial outcomes of the grant.

A list of organizations that provide fiscal sponsorship can be found in the [RFP on page 5](#). This list is not exhaustive, nor does ECIC endorse these organizations. Applicants who choose to use a fiscal sponsor, are expected to take the steps necessary to vet and select the fiscal sponsor that best meets their needs.

#### 3. Does the applicant organization need to be in the same state and/or region where the Family Child Care Network is located?

While there are no specific requirements that the applicant organization is located in the same region of the network(s), a successful applicant organization must be located in the state of Michigan, demonstrate a *strong* understanding of the diverse community in the applicable region that the network will exist in, including the strengths of the local child care system and how they will prioritize communities within the region where issues, such as poverty, existing staffing shortages in child care, and current licensed child care capacity, are severely impacting working families' access to high quality child care.

## Family Child Care Networks

### 4. What is a Family Child Care Network?

Family Child Care Networks are defined as: An interconnected group of home-based child care providers that come together to enhance supports for home-based child care, including business sustainability, quality, access to services for children and families.

### 5. To apply, should the Family Child Care Network already be formed? Or will this funding support the creation of a Family Child Care Network?

Applications to start up new family child care networks will be considered, though preference will be given to groups and informal networks of providers already working together toward the goals stated in the RFP.

### 6. Could Licensed Exempt Providers (LEPs) join a Family Child Care Network with this funding opportunity?

Yes, Licensed Exempt Providers are eligible to join a network using this funding. Additionally, there are no requirements that LEPs must join a network with the *intention* of becoming a licensed provider.

### 7. I am applying to be an FCCN Hub in Wayne County, how should I distinguish between the 2 networks I am applying for? Do I need to submit two project plans, budgets and membership rosters?

Within your application, please be sure to select your region as “Wayne” then distinguish responses per network if applicable. Specifically, in application questions #2 and #3.

*Please only submit one project plan, budget and membership roster template.* All templates should include information for both networks.

- The membership roster template has a column to distinguish between networks, “Network Name”
- A budget for two networks would be for up to 170k (up to 85k per network) and cover expenses for both networks.

### 8. How can a home-based child care provider find a network to join?

If you are a home-based child care provider interested in joining a network, please see the list of current FCCN Hubs around the state [here](#). You could also reach out to your local Great Start to Quality Resource Center to identify possible existing network(s) in your area (1-877-614-7328).

### 9. How can I find out more about existing information related to Family Child Care Networks?

Consider exploring the following resources and organizations:

- [Family Child Care Networks Act](#)
  - In 2022, the Michigan Legislature passed the “Family Child Care Networks Act” that requires MDE to establish Family Child Care Networks (FCCNs) in every region of the state and provides high-level frameworks and requirements for funded Networks.
- [Family Child Care Networks Pilot Implementation: Report and Recommendations \(2024\)](#)
  - In 2024, ECIC partnered with School Readiness Consulting to prepare a *report about lessons learned* from the original Michigan FCCN hubs *about innovative strategies*; factors

*The Family Child Care Networks project is supported through a grant awarded by the Michigan Department of Lifelong Education, Advancement, and Potential using Child Care Development Funds (CCDF).*

that enabled successful implementation of FCCNs; identified opportunities for FCCNs to incorporate equity informed policies and practices; and inform this opportunity.

- [Michigan FCCN Virtual Roundtable](#)
  - o In 2024 at the conclusion of the FCCN pilot year, FCCN members gathered to share their stories of the impact they experienced as a result of participating in this comprehensive network strategy. The recording can be viewed here.
- [Home Grown](#)
  - o Home Grown is a national collaborative of philanthropic leaders committed to improving the quality of and access to Home Based child care. ECIC has formed a strategic partnership with Home Grown for the purposes of developing and implementing this grant opportunity.
- [Strengthening Home-based Child Care Networks: An Evidence-based Framework for High-Quality](#)
  - o In 2022, Home Grown and the Erikson Institute in Chicago worked with family child care network members and staff, researchers and leaders in early care and education to create 11 quality benchmarks for home-based child care networks. The benchmarks and related indicators paint a picture of what a high-quality network strategy can look like for its participants. The benchmarks are designed to help all Networks achieve positive outcomes for participants, and the children and families the provider participants serve.

## Grant Awards and Utilization of Funds

### 10. How many FCCN Hubs will be awarded?

The Child Care Innovation Fund anticipates awarding 5 FCCN hubs to operate one network each, except for Wayne County which will have 2 networks, due to the size of the home-based child care provider population and their needs for support and services. Applicants may propose budgets of up to \$85,000.00 per network for the initial 6-month period of funding. The funds available in each subsequent year will be determined by the state’s annual state legislative appropriation to MiLEAP.

FCCNs will be funded in the five following Great Start to Quality Regions:

FCCN Hub #1 Central	FCCN Hub #2 Eastern	FCCN Hub #3 Northeast	FCCN Hub #4 Upper Peninsula	FCCN Hub #5 Wayne
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clare</li> <li>• Clinton</li> <li>• Eaton</li> <li>• Gladwin</li> <li>• Gratiot</li> <li>• Ingham</li> <li>• Isabella</li> <li>• Midland</li> <li>• Shiawassee</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arenac</li> <li>• Bay</li> <li>• Genesee <i>(Licensed Home-Based Providers only)</i></li> <li>• Huron</li> <li>• Lapeer</li> <li>• Saginaw</li> <li>• Sanilac</li> <li>• St. Clair</li> <li>• Tuscola</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alcona</li> <li>• Alpena</li> <li>• Cheboygan</li> <li>• Crawford</li> <li>• Iosco</li> <li>• Montmorency</li> <li>• Ogemaw</li> <li>• Oscoda</li> <li>• Otsego</li> <li>• Presque Isle</li> <li>• Roscommon</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alger</li> <li>• Baraga</li> <li>• Chippewa</li> <li>• Delta</li> <li>• Dickinson</li> <li>• Gogebic</li> <li>• Houghton</li> <li>• Iron</li> <li>• Keweenaw</li> <li>• Luce</li> <li>• Mackinac</li> <li>• Marquette</li> <li>• Menominee</li> <li>• Ontonagon</li> <li>• Schoolcraft</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wayne</li> </ul> <p><i>The Wayne Hub will be eligible for <b>funding two networks</b> due to the county’s size and servicing needs</i></p>

## 11. How can the Family Child Care Network funding be used?

Family Child Care Network funding must be used to implement the FCCN Scope of Work, as outlined in the [RFP on page 10](#):

- Provide tangible business and financial support that promotes solutions and sustainability
- Offer tools and training to increase capacity and enhance quality practices
- Create business owner connections to share effective practices and promote wellbeing

This may include a variety of activities, such as those outlined on page 10 and 11 of the RFP, including but not limited to the following:

- Paying staff to work on behalf of FCCN participants; organizing and moving their work plan forward in a way that is respectful, understanding, and equitable in its delivery.
- Activities which will improve the well-being of FCCN participants.
- Activities which will increase financial sustainability for FCCN participant businesses.
- Activities which will support quality program implementation at FCCN participant programs.

## 12. What activities or expenditures are not allowable for the Family Child Care Network funds?

Family Child Care Network funding may not be used for the following:

- No funds shall be expended for the purchase or improvement of land, or for the purchase, construction, or permanent improvement of any building or facility
- Funds cannot be used to pay for expenses expressly covered by another external source, i.e. previous Child Care Relief Fund Grants, Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), the Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP), Head Start, etc. or to supplant other federal or state funds.

## 13. Does the funding opportunity require that a Family Child Care Network service a minimum geographic area or population?

Yes, applicants must apply to cover one of the following Great Start to Quality Resource Center regions: Central, Eastern, North East, Upper Peninsula and Wayne County. Each Hub will be responsible for offering FCCN membership to home-based child care providers in all associated counties. Each region's counties can be found on [page 5 of RFP](#) or in question 7 of this FAQ.

## 14. Are there any stipulations to the size or scale of a Family Child Care Network?

There are no requirements around the size or scale of the network at the time of application, however, established FCCN with *10 or more provider members* will be prioritized within the application process.

FCCNs are expected to consistently recruit until they reach capacity of 25 home-based providers.

## 15. Can Family Child Care Network funds be used to purchase food for FCCN meetings?

These federal funds may be utilized to purchase food for FCCN meetings if and only if the following conditions are met:

- The meeting occurring is an "all day" meeting where food would be required to support attendees in participating. For the purposes of the unique nature of the FCCN project, considerations may be given for meetings occurring after work hours where food would be required to support attendees in participating.
- All meeting participants record their attendance on a sign-in sheet at the beginning of the meeting to justify the food expense.

- The food is consumed during active working time, such as during a “working lunch” where attendees verbally discuss relevant and related topics to the work occurring (i.e. all attendees discuss/answer two to three prompts or questions together while eating)
- A “working lunch” or “lunch activity” is listed within the meeting agenda.
- Costs are allowable, reasonable, and managed to minimize expense to the budget.

## Completing the Project Plan and Budget Templates

### 16. How do I get registered within the virtual application platform, Fluxx?

Review this [Fluxx How To document](#) to learn more about registration in Fluxx. This document also describes how to access and submit the application.

### 17. How do I complete the attached templates within the Fluxx application?

All required templates can be found linked within the application in the Fluxx platform.

Please note, the linked templates are view only and must be downloaded by the applicant and saved onto their own devices to complete. Once you have downloaded, completed, and saved your own copy of the relevant template as a PDF, you will be able to upload your completed PDF template to the application portal.

### 18. Within the Project Plan Template, how should I complete the timeline column if the activities we have planned are ongoing or we don't know exactly when they will be taking place?

Wherever possible, please include a specific date or timeframe (“ongoing” or “by the end of FY25” is not specific enough). Providing a timeframe or date, allows us to check in on your progress towards fulfilling the benchmark.

- For activities where you do not know the exact date, please write that you will make progress toward the outcomes each quarter in FY 2025.
- For activities that are ongoing, please enter that you will report on the outcomes of those activities to ECIC at least quarterly.

### 19. Within the Project Plan Template, how do I complete the outcomes column if I do not know what home-based child care providers will specifically request before starting the project?

For each benchmark, please outline what the activities described in each Benchmark will achieve within the period of performance. Outcomes should be specific and measurable wherever possible. It is understood that estimates will be used to inform outcomes. Please base any estimates of providers served on the 25 providers per network maximum capacity.

If a numeric outcome is not relevant for a specific activity, please provide details on what will be produced/accomplished.

### 20. What does it mean to explore additional funding sources?

The applicant should demonstrate a willingness and ability to braid and utilize private and public funding sources for their FCCN. This would include reviewing and applying for potential funding opportunities, in addition to this funding opportunity, to enhance services to their FCCN members. Connection to a

Regional Child Care Coalition is one way to stay informed about potential funding and financing decisions that will impact Home Based Child Care providers in your region. Regional Child Care Coalition leads will be announced in March. Developing relationships with the philanthropic organizations in the communities to be served by the FCCN Hub is another.

## Miscellaneous

### **21. When are applications due?**

Applications are due by Friday, January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2025 at 5:00pm. No late applications will be accepted.

### **22. What is the funding period?**

The funding period will be March 30, 2025 – Sept 30, 2025.