



Board of County Commissioners Agenda Request

5A
Agenda Item #

Requested Meeting Date: October 22, 2024

Title of Item: Grant Application Approval- DEED Childcare Grant

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> REGULAR AGENDA <input type="checkbox"/> CONSENT AGENDA	Action Requested: <input type="checkbox"/> Approve/Deny Motion <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adopt Resolution (attach draft) <input type="checkbox"/> Hold Public Hearing <i>*provide copy of hearing notice that was published</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Direction Requested <input type="checkbox"/> Discussion Item <input type="checkbox"/> Information Only
Submitted by: Mark Jeffers		Department: Economic Development
Presenter (Name and Title): Mark Jeffers, Economic Development Coordinator		Estimated Time Needed: 10 minutes
Summary of Issue: <p>Economic Development has identified a grant opportunity to support new child care development facilities in Aitkin County.</p> <p>DEED, through its Economic Development Division, is offering grants designed to support and implement solutions to reduce the childcare shortage in the state, including but not limited to funding for child care business start-ups or expansion, training, facility modifications or incentives to retain employees.</p> <p>The grant funding request is \$130,000 with County match funding (\$25,000 cash with matching waiver) already received for the Aitkin County Child Care Facilities Grant through ARPA funding.</p> <p>The Economic Development Committee requests approval to submit this grant application and if awarded, the County Board of Commissioners certifies Jessica Seibert, County Administrator and Mark Jeffers, Economic Development Coordinator, to accept this grant and execute the Agreement and all documents pertaining to this grant.</p>		
Alternatives, Options, Effects on Others/Comments:		
Recommended Action/Motion: Adopt a resolution for submission of DEED Childcare Economic Development Grant.		
Financial Impact: <p><i>Is there a cost associated with this request?</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p><i>What is the total cost, with tax and shipping? \$</i></p> <p><i>Is this budgeted?</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <i>Please Explain:</i></p>		

Legally binding agreements must have County Attorney approval prior to submission.

CERTIFIED COPY OF RESOLUTION OF COUNTY BOARD OF AITKIN COUNTY, MINNESOTA

ADOPTED October 22, 2024

By Commissioner: xx

20241022-xxx

DEED Childcare Economic Development Grant Submission

WHEREAS, Aitkin County Economic Development Coordinator has identified a grant opportunity to support new child care development facilities in Aitkin County, AND

WHEREAS, that the Aitkin County Economic Development Coordinator intends to submit an application requesting a grant amount of \$130,000; AND

WHEREAS, that Aitkin County has the legal authority to apply for financial assistance, and the institutional, managerial, and financial capability to ensure adequate project administration; AND

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Mark Jeffers, Economic Development Coordinator is hereby authorized to apply to the DEED Childcare Economic Development Grant for funding on behalf of Aitkin County.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the County Board of Commissioners certifies Jessica Seibert, County Administrator and Mark Jeffers, Economic Development Coordinator, to accept this grant if awarded and execute the Agreement and all documents pertaining to this grant.

Commissioner xx seconded the adoption of the resolution and it was declared adopted upon the following vote

xxx MEMBERS PRESENT

All Members Voting xxx

STATE OF MINNESOTA}
COUNTY OF AITKIN}

I, Jessica Seibert, County Administrator, Aitkin County, Minnesota do hereby certify that I have compared the foregoing with the original resolution filed in the Administration Office of Aitkin County in Aitkin, Minnesota as stated in the minutes of the proceedings of said Board on the 22nd day of October 2024, and that the same is a true and correct copy of the whole thereof.

Witness my hand and seal this 22nd day of October 2024

Jessica Seibert
County Administrator

Child Care Economic Development

Application Packet

Please complete all fields within this application and sign where indicated. Incomplete submissions will not be considered.

Submit your complete application via email to CCED.DEED@state.mn.us with the subject line FY25 CCED Application – [insert applicant organization name].

The deadline to submit application is October 31, 2024, no later than 4 PM.

Remember, you must submit all documents listed below for the application to be considered complete:

- ☒ Form 1. [Cover Sheet](#)
- ☒ Form 2. [Narrative Responses](#)
- ☒ Form 3. [Objectives](#)
- ☒ Form 4. [Budget](#)
- ☒ Form 5. [Partnership Chart](#)
- ☒ Form 6. [Unemployment Insurance Account Consent](#)
- ☒ Form 7. [Applicant Conflict of Interest Disclosure Form](#)
- ☒ Form 8. [Affidavit of Non-Collusion](#)
- ☒ Form 9. [Performance Capacity](#)
- ☒ Form 10. [No Conviction of Felony Financial Crime by Principal](#)
- ☒ Form 11. [Evidence of Good Standing](#)
- ☐ Form 12. [Required Nonprofit Grantee Documents](#)

Form 1. Cover Sheet

Organization Information

Organization Name: Aitkin County Government

Organization Type: ☐ City ☒ County ☐ School District ☐ Tribal Entity ☐ 501(c)3 Non-profit Corporation
☐ 501(c) Other Non-Profit (Provide organization type): _____

Organization Website: www.co.atikin.mn.us, www.naturallybetterhere.com

Physical Address: Aitkin County Government Center, 307 2nd Street NW, Room 316, Aitkin MN 56431

Mailing Address: Aitkin County Government Center, 307 2nd Street NW, Room 316, Aitkin MN 56431

Federal Tax ID (required): CLK7L6F3AM63 Minnesota Tax ID (required): 41-60005749

SWIFT Vendor ID (required): 0000197275 UEI Number (required): 047464805

Organization Lead Name: Jessica Seibert Title: County Administrator

Telephone Number: 218.927.7276 Email Address: jessica.seibert@co.atikin.mn.us

Program Contact Name: Mark Jeffers Title: Economic Dev. Coordinator

Telephone Number: 218.513.6188 Email Address: mark.jeffers@co.atikin.mn.us

Proposal Information

Proposal Name: Aitkin Early Care Innovators Fund

Proposal Summary (limit of 2-3 sentences):

This proposal seeks to bridge the financial gap to open two childcare centers in Aitkin County, creating over 90 new childcare slots. Additionally, it will provide funding aid to at-home child care providers for training, licensing, and essential equipment.

Geographic Area Served by Organization: All of Aitkin County, Cities of Aitkin, Hill City, McGregor, Tamarack, Palisade

Targeted Populations Served by Organization (check all that apply):

☒ African American

☒ Hispanic/Latino/Latina/Latine

☒ Rural Communities

☒ African Immigrant

☒ LGBTQIA+ communities

☐ Other-please describe

☒ American Indian

☒ Low-income individuals

☒ Asian/Pacific Islander

☒ People living with disabilities

Total Amount of DEED Funds Requested: \$130,000

Total Amount of Matching Funds Committed: \$25,000

Does this project qualify for a matching waiver?

- ☐ Yes: More than 75% of new child slots created with these funds are for infants and toddlers.¹
- ☒ Yes: More than 50% of the new child slots created with these funds are for child slots available outside of standard business hours (6:00 a.m. through 6:00 p.m.)
- ☐ Yes: The project will be located in a geographic area, such as zip code or census tract, where 30% or more children² are Black, Indigenous, and people of color. A Tribal nation will automatically meet this requirement.
- ☒ Yes: The project will be located in a geographic area, such as county, zip code or census tract, where at least 15% families living in poverty.³
- ☐ No:

Please briefly describe and document how your agency meets the waiver requirement:

60% of new child slots will have the ability to be open outside of standard business hours

Estimated Project Output and Outcomes

Number of family childcare providers served: 17+5=22 Number of childcare centers served: 2

Number of childcare worker jobs created: 8 Number of childcare worker jobs retained: 23

Number of new licensed child slots created for:

Infants: 16 Preschoolers: 40

Toddlers: 28 School Age: 14

Total: 98

Percentage of new licensed child slots available outside of standard hours of care (outside of 6:00AM through 6:00PM time windows): 60%

Total state grant funds per new licensed child slots created: \$1326.53

I certify that the information contained herein is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge, that the applicant meets the eligibility criteria as outlined with the RFP and that I am authorized to submit this application on behalf of the applicant. I understand that grants are on a reimbursement basis, only approved, eligible expenditures will be incurred and reimbursed, and invoices must be accompanied by substantiation of charges.

Authorized Signature

Title

Date

¹ For Childcare Centers, infant refers to a child who is at least 6 weeks old but less than 16 months old, and toddler refers to a child who is at least 16 months old but less than 33 months old. For Family Childcare, infant refers to a child who is at least 6 weeks old but less than 12 months old, and toddler refers to a child who is at least 12 months old but less than 24 months old.

² Children refers to any person under the age of 18.

³ Families living in poverty refers to any family whose total family income falls below the U.S. Federal Poverty guidelines within service population county, city, or census tract according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

Form 2. Narrative Responses

The objective of this grant is to increase the number of quality childcare providers in order to support regional economic development. In the response to this RFP the applicant must demonstrate how these grant funds will be used to implement solutions to reduce the childcare shortage in the state and support economic growth in the community.

Please provide a response to the questions below. Each question is assigned a point value for its thoroughness and ability to address the question.

Executive Summary (10 Points) (Limit of 500 words)

Aitkin County faces a critical shortage of child care options, with only one Child Care Center Facility located in the City of Aitkin. This facility is not centrally located and primarily serves city residents, while the rest of the county is supported by 17 active at-home child care providers. All existing facilities are at capacity with extensive waiting lists. The shortage of child care directly impacts local unemployment rates, family self-sufficiency, and the county's ability to attract and retain young families. Aitkin County is applying for \$130,000 in funding, with a \$25,000 County cash match, to address this urgent need. This proposal seeks to bridge the financial gap to open two childcare centers in Aitkin County, creating over 90 new childcare slots. Additionally, it will provide funding aid to at-home child care providers for training, licensing, and essential equipment. . Most of the proposed licensing standards are going to be a huge financial impact on licensed homes if they are enacted. Childcare licensing is also moving to a new HUB online system coming fall 2025 which will require all providers to have a computer or smartphone and wifi in order to do all paperwork, changes and submissions submitted online on the HUB.

By expanding access and supporting local providers, we aim to build a sustainable and high-quality childcare network for the county's families.

Aitkin County currently has 17 licensed in-home childcare providers, offering 206 slots. One provider is in the process of applying for a license, which will add 10 more slots in 2024-2025. Childcare demand remains a significant challenge. Recently, one provider in Hill City closed to care for a parent, and another in McGregor is transitioning to Carlton County. This provider continues operating in McGregor until their home sells and they complete licensing in Carlton County. Additionally, another provider plans to retire in May 2025. By 2025, the number of licensed homes will decrease to 15, unless the new application is approved.

The lack of available care is forcing many young parents to stay home instead of participating in the workforce. As a key hub in northern Minnesota, Aitkin County offers strong schools, excellent infrastructure, and abundant recreational opportunities, but without sufficient child care, the county's economic growth and workforce stability are at risk. Aitkin County is strategically located between Brainerd, Grand Rapids, and Duluth, with tourism, healthcare, forest products, and agriculture as its primary industries. Its rich natural resources, including 103 miles of the Mississippi River and Mille Lacs Lake, make it a highly desirable location for families, but increased child care capacity is essential for ensuring a thriving community.

Organizational Capacity and Relevant Experience (20 points) (Limit 750 words)

The proposal must outline the capacity of the lead applicant organization to successfully meet the objectives of the grant. The lead organization or partner organization must demonstrate one or more of the following: experience in the operation of, planning for, financing of, advocacy for, or advancement of the delivery of childcare services.

1. How is the lead applicant organization equipped to successfully lead the proposed project and meet the objectives of this grant?
2. Please describe the experience the lead applicant have in managing state and/or federal grants.
3. Describe staff experience in early childhood as it relates to the project.
4. Describe organization current staffing and current budget.
5. Has the agency been awarded an active grant from DEED in the past 5 years?

Lead Applicant Organization's Capacity to Lead the Project:

The lead organization, Aitkin County, is uniquely positioned to manage and implement the proposed childcare project due to its extensive experience in community development, local economic planning, and partnership building. As a county government, Aitkin County has the capacity to bring together key stakeholders, coordinate resources, and manage complex projects. With a demonstrated commitment to enhancing childcare infrastructure, the county has previously overseen projects related to public services, ensuring they are delivered efficiently and effectively. Additionally, the county has strong relationships with local providers and organizations involved in child care, ensuring a collaborative approach to solving the child care shortage.

Experience Managing State and Federal Grants:

Aitkin County has successfully managed numerous state and federal grants, including projects related to infrastructure, public health, and community development, broadband, childcare and CARES grant programs. This experience includes managing large-scale budgets, meeting compliance requirements, and overseeing multi-faceted projects that involve collaboration across public and private sectors. The county's grant management team is well-versed in reporting, auditing, and ensuring proper use of funds to meet objectives, having recently completed grants funded through federal/state sources such as the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program for Broadband and DEED Childcare Economic Development grants.

Staff Experience in Early Childhood:

While the county itself does not provide direct child care services, the staff involved in the project bring significant experience in community planning and program development. Several team members have previously worked with child care providers through local economic development initiatives, focusing on enhancing operational capacity and access to resources for early childhood care. In addition, the project will be supported by professionals who have extensive experience working with early childhood programs, training, and advocacy efforts.

Current Staffing and Budget:

Aitkin County's current staffing includes professionals in community development, economic planning, Health and Human Services, Auditor, grant management, and public policy. The county operates with an annual budget of approximately \$40 million, which covers a wide range of public services, including transportation, social services, and economic development initiatives. The county's financial management team is experienced in overseeing large, complex budgets and ensuring proper use of public funds, with multiple staff members dedicated to grant administration and compliance.

Previous DEED Grants:

Aitkin County has been awarded and successfully managed DEED grants within the past five years. The grant was focused on Childcare economic development and job creation in the region, Broadband CDBG-CV and the county met all performance and compliance requirements, resulting in a successful completion of the projects.

Project Description, Design, and Methods (20 Points) (Limit 750 words)

The proposal should be thoughtfully designed using approaches, techniques, and strategies to support economic development by increasing the supply of quality childcare. Priority in scoring will be given to projects that seek funds to make sustainable investments that result in new supply of childcare beyond this one-time funding opportunity.

- What is the geographic scope of the project?
- Why is the proposed project needed to increase the supply of quality childcare in the community?
- What kind of solutions will be implemented to meet objectives of this grant?
- How does the project demonstrate innovative approaches, techniques or strategies?
- Does the proposed project use evidence-based or community-based best practices?

Geographic Scope of the Project:

The geographic scope of this project encompasses the entirety of Aitkin County, which includes rural communities such as Aitkin, Hill City, McGregor, and Malmø. With only one existing Child Care Center located in the City of Aitkin, the project will target areas across the county where access to quality child care is limited, particularly in more remote regions. The plans are currently underway to open childcare centers in the cities of McGregor and Tamarack. By focusing on county-wide solutions, this project aims to address the child care shortage in both the city and rural areas, ensuring families throughout the region have access to quality services.

Need for the Project to Increase Quality Childcare Supply:

Aitkin County faces a critical need to increase the supply of quality childcare, as existing providers are operating at full capacity with waiting lists. This shortage has broader economic implications, as local businesses are impacted by a lack of workforce participation, and young families may be deterred from settling in the community. This project is essential to expanding child care capacity to meet the needs of local families and support the county's economic growth.

Solutions to Meet Grant Objectives:

This project will implement two core solutions to meet the objectives of the grant:

Opening Two New Child Care Centers: This will add over 90 new child care slots, directly addressing the supply shortage and expanding access to families across the county.

Funding Aid for At-Home Providers: By offering financial support for training, licensing, and essential equipment, the project will strengthen the sustainability of existing at-home child care providers and encourage new providers to enter the field.

This multi-faceted approach ensures both immediate and long-term expansion of child care capacity, creating a stable and sustainable supply of quality services.

Innovative Approaches, Techniques, and Strategies:

This project demonstrates innovation by combining two key strategies: the physical expansion of child care facilities and targeted support for at-home providers. This dual approach is designed to balance long-term, sustainable investments with immediate capacity increases. Additionally, by collaborating with community organizations and leveraging local partnerships, the project will implement a community-centered approach, ensuring that the solutions are tailored to the unique needs of Aitkin County's rural population. By addressing both brick-and-mortar expansions and enhancing home-based care, the project brings flexibility and scalability to childcare growth.

Use of Evidence-Based or Community-Based Best Practices:

The proposed project utilizes community-based best practices that have proven successful in addressing child care shortages in rural areas. The plan to support both child care centers and at-home providers is grounded in evidence from similar rural communities, where a combination of facility expansion and provider support has been shown to create sustainable growth in child care availability. Furthermore, the project aligns with recommendations from state and national child care advocacy organizations, which emphasize the importance of multi-pronged approaches that include both infrastructure investment and workforce development.

Work Plan (10 Points) (Limit 500 words)

The proposal should show clear and measurable outcomes, activities, and a reasonable timeframe for performing and reporting on project activities. Outcomes must include but are not limited to the number of new providers, the number of additional childcare provider jobs created, the number of additional childcare slots, and the amount of local funds invested. Form 3 is included and scored separately. The Workplan and Objectives are worth 20 points total.

- What are the key activities to be funded through this project?
- What are the goals and measurable outcomes for this project?
- What is the timetable for completion of the project?
- Is the timetable achievable within the timeline of the grant?

Key Activities to Be Funded Through This Project:

The key activities funded through this project include:

Construction completion and Opening of Two New Child Care Centers:

The project will fund the physical development of two new centers in Aitkin County, providing over 90 new child care slots.

Funding Support for At-Home Providers:

Financial aid will be provided to existing and new at-home child care providers, covering costs for training, licensing, and essential equipment to expand and enhance child care capacity across the county.

Community Outreach and Provider Recruitment:

The project will invest in outreach programs to recruit and support new providers and inform the community about available child care services, including the promotion of newly opened centers and at-home providers.

Capacity-Building for Providers:

The project will offer professional development opportunities for current and prospective child care providers, focusing on business management, early childhood education best practices, and sustainability.

Goals and Measurable Outcomes:

The measurable outcomes for this project include:

Number of New Child Care Providers:

The project aims to add at least 5 new at-home providers in Aitkin County.

Number of Additional Child Care Provider Jobs Created:

The opening of two new centers and the expansion of at-home providers will create an estimated 20-30 new jobs in the child care sector.

Number of Additional Child Care Slots: The project will result in the creation of over 90 new child care slots at the two new centers, with an additional 25 slots expected from expanded at-home providers.

Amount of Local Funds Invested:

A minimum of \$25,000 in local funds will be invested as a match, in addition to in-kind contributions from community partners.

Reduction in Waiting Lists:

A measurable reduction in the number of children on child care waiting lists in the county, with the goal of cutting the current list by at least 40%.

Timetable for Completion of the Project: The project will follow this timetable: Months 1-3: Finalize planning, secure contractors, and begin construction on the new child care centers. Simultaneously, launch outreach efforts to recruit and support at-home providers. Months 4-6: Continue construction and begin accepting applications for new at-home providers. Provide training and licensing support to prospective providers. Months 7-9: Complete construction of child care centers and finalize setup. Begin hiring for staff at new centers. Enroll children in both new centers and expanded at-home provider slots. Months 10-12: All new child care centers and additional at-home provider slots are fully operational.

Is the Timetable Achievable Within the Grant Timeline?

Yes, the timetable is realistic and achievable within the timeline of the grant. Aitkin County has extensive experience in managing complex projects and adhering to deadlines. The timeline allows sufficient flexibility for delays in construction or recruitment, ensuring that the objectives can be met within a 12-month period.

Partnerships (10 Points) (Limit 750 words)

The proposal should outline the partnerships created to support this proposed project including public sector partnerships, non-profit partnerships, and private-sector partnerships. Priority will be given to projects that demonstrate private-sector engagement in support of regional economic growth. Partnerships must be documented using Form 5.

- Who are the financial and programmatic partners supporting this project?
- What contributions will each partner make to the proposed project?
- Will the partnerships support ongoing operations?
- Does the proposal demonstrate meaningful collaboration with key partners?
- Does the proposal demonstrate support from the communities in which the project will take place?
- A letter of support from all partners identified. This should be included as part of the attachments.

Public Sector Partnerships

City of Tamarack: The City of Tamarack worked collaboratively with the private childcare provider by offering a low cost lease to own program for the school house property.

ARDC: ARDC approved a business loan for the private childcare provider in order to continue their remodeling project.

Private Sector Partnerships:

Talon Metals: Talon Metals was instrumental in attracting the private childcare provider to our area and the opportunity. Talon executed this by leading a "postcard" mailing inquiring whether anyone had interest in starting a childcare facility in the Tamarack area. This mailing led to interest from the private childcare provider. Talon was instrumental in collaborating with the County and City to make the opportunity a reality.

Collaboration and Community Support:

Letters of Support:

City of Tamarack

Talon Metals

Aitkin County Health & Human Services

Impact and Evaluation (10 Points) (Limit 750 words)

The proposal should provide an estimate on the number of licensed childcare slots need to meet the needs of the communities served and the number of childcare slots that will be created and retained with this funding. In addition, the proposal should address how those outcomes will be measured and used to ensure grant objectives are met.

1. What is the number of childcare slots needed with the project area(s) to meet the needs of families?
 2. How many childcare slots will be created with this funding?
 3. What is the cost (in state dollars) per new childcare slot created?
 4. How will measurable outcomes be tracked?
 5. How will evaluation material and outcomes be used to ensure the grant objectives are met?
 6. Will the project utilize any community-based evaluation processes?
1. What is the number of childcare slots needed with the project area(s) to meet the needs of families?

In a recent First Children's Finance document, the data and potential need analysis indicates that the Northeast Region of the state of Minnesota, which Aitkin County is included in, is currently in need of 4,223 childcare slots.

2. How many childcare slots will be created with this funding?

This grant funding will confirm the opening of two Childcare Centers. This will confirm 98 additional child slots in our County. This grant funding also has a goal of opening an additional 5 at home childcare providers, potentially adding up to 70 child slots

3. What is the cost (in state dollars) per new child slots created?

Total state grant funds per new licensed child slots created = \$1,326.53 per slot

4. How will measurable outcomes be tracked?

The lead organization, Aitkin County, is uniquely positioned to manage and implement the proposed childcare project due to its extensive experience in community development, local economic planning, and partnership building. As a county government, Aitkin County has the capacity to bring together key stakeholders, coordinate resources, and manage complex projects. With a demonstrated commitment to enhancing childcare infrastructure, the county has previously overseen projects related to public services, ensuring they are delivered efficiently and effectively. Additionally, the county has strong relationships with local providers and organizations involved in child care, ensuring a collaborative approach to solving the child care shortage.

Bonus Points (Maximum of 10 Points awarded) (Limit 250 words)

1. Is the project located in a city, county, or census tract service area⁴ where 30% or more children are Black, Indigenous, and people of color or is the applicant a Tribal nation? (5 points)
2. The project will be located in a geographic area, county, such as zip code or census tract, where at least 15% families living in poverty⁵. (5 points)
3. The project is located in a [Child Care Access Equity Area](#)⁶. (5 points) To serve a Child Care Access Equity Area, a program must be within 20 miles in outstate Minnesota and within 5 miles in the metro counties.

Both childcare centers are situated in census tract 27001770402, identified as a Child Care Access Equity Area. Additionally, new in-home providers have opportunities to open in census tracts 2700177020, 2700177030, and 27001770402, all of which are designated Child Care Access Equity Areas.

Aitkin County has an overall poverty rate of 12.4%, slightly below the national average of 12.5%. However, certain areas within the county are likely to experience higher poverty rates. The largest demographic living in poverty includes males aged 55-64, followed by females aged 75 and older, and females aged 55-64. The most common racial or ethnic group living below the poverty line in Aitkin County is White, followed by Native American and Other.

⁴ An eligible service area is defined as one or more county, city, school district, development region, workforce service area, Initiative Foundation service area, political subdivision, Tribal Nation, or other defined geographic area located in the State of Minnesota.

⁵ Families living in poverty refers to any family whose total family income falls below the U.S. Federal Poverty guidelines within service population county, city or census tract according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

⁶ Per the Minnesota DHS Child Development Services Unit, Minnesota census tracts that meet the criteria to be considered '[Child Care Access Equity Areas](#)' are tracts with higher poverty rates, higher unemployment, lower homeownership rates, lower household incomes, and lower access to child care.

Form 3. Objectives and Timeline (10 Points)

Complete the chart below outlining the major objectives, activities, and outcomes of the overall project, including any activities, progress, and start/end dates.

Objective Description	Activities <i>Steps, activities, tasks to achieve objective, frequency (e.g., monthly, quarterly)</i>	Projected Outcome(s)	Start Date	Completion Date
Complete construction and open the Tamarack Learning Center, Tamarack MN	Support construction and open the facility	Open facility, 49 slots	1-1-25	6-1-25
Complete construction and open the Little Pine Academy, McGregor MN	Support construction and open the facility	Open facility, 49 slots	1-1-25	6-1-25
Attract 5+ new at home childcare providers	Offer a local childcare grant through the County to help fund remodeling to licensing standards.	5+ new, up to 70 slots	1-1-25	12-31-25

Form 4. Budget (10 Points)

Total Project Budget Narrative (Limit 500 words)

Aitkin County faces a critical shortage of child care options, with only one Child Care Center Facility located in the City of Aitkin. This facility is not centrally located and primarily serves city residents, while the rest of the county is supported by 17 active at-home child care providers. All existing facilities are at capacity with extensive waiting lists. The shortage of child care directly impacts local unemployment rates, family self-sufficiency, and the county's ability to attract and retain young families. Aitkin County is applying for \$130,000 in funding, with a \$25,000 County cash match, to address this urgent need. This proposal seeks to bridge the financial gap to open two childcare centers in Aitkin County, creating over 90 new childcare slots. Additionally, it will provide funding aid to at-home child care providers for training, licensing, and essential equipment. . Most of the proposed licensing standards are going to be a huge financial impact on licensed homes if they are enacted. Childcare licensing is also moving to a new HUB online system coming fall 2025 which will require all providers to have a computer or smartphone and wifi in order to do all paperwork, changes and submissions submitted online on the HUB.

Budget includes planned funding for the following:

Tamarack Learning Center: \$60,000 for construction and remodel to state licensing standards

Little Pine Academy: \$40,000 for construction and remodel to state licensing standards

New home childcare: \$55,000 for local grant activation to attract new and support remodel to state licensing standards

Total Project Funding Sources

List the sources of funding, and the status of the funding. Points will only be awarded for committed sources of funding. The total under sources should be equal to the total under uses.

Funding Source	Type of Funding (state grant, cash or in-kind)	Amount
DEED CCED Grant	State Funds	\$130,000
Aitkin County Economic Development	Childcare grant funds	\$25,000
Total		

Project Uses

Project Activities	DEED	Grantee Match	Total
Personnel			
Fringe Benefits			
Travel (In-State, Direct Service Related Only):			
Equipment:			
Supplies:			
Contractual:			
Provider Subgrants:	\$130,000	\$25,000	\$155,000
Other (specify): _____			
Admin and Indirect Costs (Max 10% of DEED funds):			
Total Costs:	\$130,000	\$25,000	\$155,000

Form 5. Partnership Chart

List all partners that will contribute to the proposed project. Add additional sheets as necessary. All partners proposed to receive funds from this grant **must** be included in the Partnership Chart or costs associated with any unlisted partners may be disallowed.

If a partner has a potential conflict of interest, such as providing donations to the applicant or sitting on the applicant's board of directors, attach a letter of disclosure explaining the relationship of the partner to the applicant organization.

Type of Organization (e.g., employer, educational institution, non-profit, consultant, financial management services, etc.)	Name and Address of Organization (If applicable: Indicate if trainer is MOHE compliant)	Type of Commitment (Case Mgmt., Training, Accounting Time, Staff, Resources, Space, Referrals, etc.)	Contact Person Email Address Telephone Number	Letter of Support Enclosed Yes/No	Conflict of Interest Disclosure Letter (If applicable) Yes/No	If applicable, how much funds will this partner receive from this grant?
County Government	Aitkin County, 307 2nd St. NW, Aitkin MN 56431	Grant facilitator	mark.jeffers@co.aitkin.mn.us, 218.513.6188	Yes	Yes	

Form 6. Unemployment Insurance Account Consent

Before awarding a grant, DEED will need to verify that your organization does not have any outstanding Unemployment Insurance tax liability. If you choose not to provide this consent, DEED staff may determine that you are ineligible for DEED funding.

This authorization to release unemployment insurance data is not valid until the requirements listed below are met.

You need to:

1. Check the appropriate box authorizing what data the MN Unemployment Insurance program can release.
2. Have an active user listed on the MN Unemployment Insurance employer account:
 - a. Sign and date this consent form
 - b. Print their name below their signature.

The consent form will expire three months after the signature date.

If you have any questions about your private data, how to complete this consent form, or if you want to withdraw your consent, call Aaron Tell (651) 259-7567.

EXPLANATION OF YOUR RIGHTS

Purpose of this form

You must complete, sign, and return this form if you want to authorize a person or organization to receive certain private or nonpublic information that we collect to administer the Unemployment Insurance (UI) Program.

You have the right to choose what data we release. This means you can let us release all of the data, some of the data, or none of the data listed on this consent.

You have the right to allow us to release the data to all, some or none of the persons or entities listed on this form.

This means you can choose which entities or persons may receive the data and what data they may receive.

You may withdraw your permission at any time. Withdrawing your permission will not affect the data that we have already released because we had your permission to release the data.

1. Data Subject

Your name or name of organization: County of Aitkin

Minnesota Unemployment Insurance (UI) Employer Account No.: 07972219

Address: 307 2nd Street NW room 312

City: Aitkin State: MN ZIP Code: 56431

2. Authorized person or organization

I authorize the following person or organization to receive the private and nonpublic data checked below:

Fiscal Program & Monitoring staff
DEED, Employment and Training Programs Division
Great Northern Building
180 East 5th Street, 12th Floor
Saint Paul, MN 55101

3. UI Data

Types of data that agree to be released:

- ☒ Payment- Employer UI account status
- ☐ Other – information about all outstanding UI account debt, including the age, amount owed and when the debt was incurred. Status of wage detail submission.

4. Signature

I voluntarily authorize DEED to release the selected private data to the above individual/organization. I am aware of the purpose for releasing the private data and I understand that there may be consequences for releasing the data to the individual/organization.

Your signature or signature of corporate officer, partner, or fiduciary

Print your name (and title, if applicable): Jessica Seibert

Phone: 218.927.7276 Date (mm-dd-yyyy): _____

Form 7. Conflict of Interest Disclosure

This form gives applicants and grantees an opportunity to disclose any actual or potential conflicts of interest that may exist when receiving a grant. It is the applicant/grantee's obligation to be familiar with the Office of Grants Management (OGM) [Policy 08-01: Grants Conflict of Interest](#) and to disclose any conflicts of interest accordingly.

All grant applicants must complete and sign a conflict-of-interest disclosure form.

☒ I or my grant organization do NOT have an ACTUAL or POTENTIAL conflict of interest.

If at any time after submission of this form, I or my grant organization discover any conflict of interest(s), I or my grant organization will disclose that conflict immediately to the appropriate agency or grant program personnel.

☐ I or my grant organization have an ACTUAL or POTENTIAL conflict of interest. (Please describe below):

If at any time after submission of this form, I or my grant organization discover any additional conflict of interest(s), I or my grant organization will disclose that conflict immediately to the appropriate agency or grant program personnel.

Printed name: Jessica Seibert

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Organization: Aitkin County

Form 8. Affidavit of Non-Collusion

Instructions: Please return this completed form as part of the Request for Proposal Response submittal.

I swear (or affirm) under the penalty of perjury:

1. That I am the Responder (if the Responder is an individual), a partner in the company (if the Responder is a partnership), or an officer or employee of the responding corporation having authority to sign on its behalf (if the Responder is a corporation).
2. That the attached proposal submitted in response to the Targeted Populations Capacity Building Competitive Grant Program Request for Proposal has been arrived at by the Responder independently and has been submitted without collusion with and without any agreement, understanding or planned common course of action with any other Responder of materials, supplies, equipment, or services described in the Request for Proposals, designed to limit fair and open competition.
3. That the contents of the proposal have not been communicated by the Responder or its employees or agents to any person not an employee or agent of the Responder and will not be communicated to any such persons prior to the official opening of the proposals.
4. That I am fully informed regarding the accuracy of the statements made in this affidavit.

Authorized Signature:

Responder's firm name: Aitkin County

Print authorized representative name: Jessica Seibert

Title: County Administrator

Authorized signature: _____ Date (mm/dd/yyyy): _____

Notary Public

Subscribed and sworn to before me this _____ day of _____, 20_____.

Notary Public signature: _____ Commission Expires (mm/dd/yy): _____

Form 9. Performance Capacity-Only Complete if Awarded

INSTRUCTIONS: Please respond to these performance capacity questions as required by [16B.981 Subd. 2](#) (1) and as part of the response to this Grant Request for Proposal. This form fulfills the requirements in [OGM Sample Template Exhibit C](#)

1. Please describe your history of performing the work that will be funded by the grant:
This includes describing your organization's current staffing, current budget, and internal capacity to meet specified measurable outcomes.

2. Have you been awarded or have an active grant from DEED in the past 5 years? ☐ Yes ☐ No
If Yes, please specify the program(s) and dates of the contract(s).

Form 10. No Conviction of Felony Financial Crime by a Principal

INSTRUCTIONS: Grant applicant must certify to this condition required under this Grant Request for Proposal.

Please sign below to finalize response and submit this document as part of the grant application materials/response to the Grant Request for Proposal. This form fulfills the requirements in [OGM Sample Template Exhibit D](#)

Please attach an organizational chart or list of principals that you are certifying for below.

[16B.981 Subd. 2](#) (6) requires that no current principals of a grantee have been convicted of a felony financial crime in the last 10 years. A principal is defined as a public official, a board member, or staff (paid or volunteer) with the authority to access funds provided by this grant opportunity or to determine how those funds are used.

By signing here, I warrant that no current principal of my organization has been convicted of a felony financial crime in the last 10 years.

I certify that this information is true, correct, and reliable.

The submission of inaccurate or misleading information may be grounds for disqualification from the grant contract agreement award and may subject me/my organization to suspension or debarment proceedings, as well as other remedies available to the State, by law.

Print Name Jessica Seibert Title County Administrator

Signature _____ Date _____

Form 11. Evidence of Good Standing

INSTRUCTIONS: Potential grantee must certify that the organization has a status of “In Good Standing” with the Secretary of State as required by [16B.981 Subd. 2](#) (3) and as part of the response to this Grant Request for Proposal. This form fulfills the requirements in [OGM Sample Template Exhibit E](#)

Is your organization (for-profit or nonprofit) registered with the Secretary of State and has a status of “In Good Standing”? ☒ Yes ☐ No

Form 12. Required Nonprofit Grantee Documents

INSTRUCTIONS: Please answer the following questions and provide the requested information. This is not required for municipalities.

1. Were you required to submit a 990 or a form 990-EZ for your organization's last fiscal year? ☐ Yes ☒ No
2. If you are exempt from filing or your organization has been in business for less than one year, please describe the internal controls you have over business expenditures and outcomes of the grant funds, if awarded. Examples of internal controls include, but are not limited to: documented policies and procedures; segregation of duties such as having different staff who enter receivables versus those who post payments; using a payroll system; segregation of grant funds; requiring usernames and passwords, along with appropriate levels of access to systems; supervisor review and approval of payments and timecards; and other internal controls to ensure compliance with laws and regulations and safeguard use of grant funds.

3. Are you a charitable organization that made over \$750,000 in your last fiscal year and were required to have an audited financial statement per MS 309.53? ☐ Yes ☒ No

Non-profit grant applicants are required to submit the following documents, as applicable to the organization and as required by [16B.981 Subd. 2](#) (2) and [16B.981 Subd. 2](#) (5) as part of the pre-award risk assessment:

- ☐ Most recent 990 or Form 990-EZ filed with the IRS
- ☐ Most recent audit as required, under Section 309.53, Subdivision 3

If not in existence long enough or not required to file Form 990, Form 990 EZ or most recent audit, the nonprofit grant applicant must:

- ☐ Demonstrate exemption – i.e., Provide a copy of the IRS determination letter
- ☐ Submit the most recent set of board-reviewed (or managing group if applicable) financial statements



October 11, 2024

Minnesota Office of Child Care Community Partnerships
Tammy Wickstrom

RE: DEED Childcare Economic Development Grant

Greetings Tammy,

Talon Metals would like to express our support for Aitkin County's Child Care Economic Development Grant request.

Aitkin County faces a critical shortage of childcare options, with only one Child Care Center Facility located in the City of Aitkin. This facility is not centrally located and primarily serves city residents, while areas like our community in Tamarack on the east side of the county have limited options. The shortage of childcare directly impacts future growth and development of our communities in Aitkin County when it comes to encouraging new families, workforce and businesses to the region.

This grant opportunity would greatly improve the quality of life for Aitkin County residents. This also is a catalyst for improving workforce for all businesses in our area. Improving childcare for our residents and businesses is one of the highest priorities in Aitkin County.

Talon Metals strongly supports this project and would appreciate your consideration of Aitkin County's CCED grant application.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Jessica Johnson
Community Outreach & Government Relations Manager
Talon Metals
johnson@talonmetals.com
218-460-9345

October 10, 2024

Minnesota Office of Child Care Community Partnerships
Tammy Wickstrom

RE: DEED Childcare Economic Development Grant

Hello Tammy,

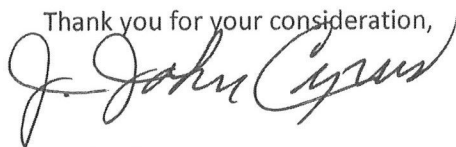
City of Tamarack would like to express our support for Aitkin County's Child Care Economic Development Grant request.

Aitkin County faces a critical shortage of child care options, with only one Child Care Center Facility located in the City of Aitkin. This facility is not centrally located and primarily serves city residents, while the rest of the county is supported by 17 active at-home child care providers. All existing facilities are at capacity with extensive waiting lists. The shortage of child care directly impacts local unemployment rates, family self-sufficiency, and the county's ability to attract and retain young families.

This grant opportunity would greatly improve the quality of life for Aitkin County residents. This also is a catalyst to improving workforce for all businesses in our area. Improving child care to our residents and businesses is one of the highest priorities in Aitkin County.

City of Tamarack strongly supports this project and would appreciate your consideration of Aitkin County's CCED grant application.

Thank you for your consideration,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "J. John Cyrus". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "J." being small and the last name "Cyrus" being larger and more prominent.

J. John Cyrus
Mayor



AITKIN COUNTY HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

204 First Street NW
Aitkin, MN 56431

Phone: 800-328-3744/218-927-7200
Fax: 218-927-7210

October 10, 2024

Minnesota Office of Child Care Community Partnerships
Tammy Wickstrom

RE: DEED Childcare Economic Development Grant

Hello Tammy,

Aitkin County Health and Human Services would like to express our support for Aitkin County's Child Care Economic Development Grant request.

Aitkin County faces a critical shortage of child care options, with only one Child Care Center Facility located in the City of Aitkin. This facility is not centrally located and primarily serves city residents and does not accept school age or after school children. The rest of the county is supported by 17 active at-home child care providers. This number is decreasing as one provider is currently relocating across county lines, another provider will be retiring in the summer of 2025, and another provider is considering retirement. All existing facilities are at capacity with extensive waiting lists.

The shortage of child care directly impacts local unemployment rates, ability for someone to accept employment within the county with no open childcare slots, family self-sufficiency, and the county's ability to attract and retain young families. The continued loss of licensed childcare will continue to have a drastic impact the entire county and employers unless we can provide some type of funding and supports to entice new childcare homes to open.

This grant opportunity would greatly improve the quality of life and resources available for Aitkin County residents. This also is a catalyst to improving workforce for all businesses in our area. Improving child care to our residents and businesses is one of the highest priorities in Aitkin County.

Aitkin County Health and Human services strongly supports this project and would appreciate your consideration of Aitkin County's CCED grant application.

Thank you for your consideration,

Brenda Butterfield
Licensor for Aitkin County Health and Human Services

Jessi Schultz
Supervisor

"This institution is an equal opportunity provider."