

Child Care Coordinator Grant Request

The BEDC is requesting \$80,000 grant from the City of Brookings American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) allocation to fund a 3 year program to increase the number of available licensed, child care slots in Brookings County. The Child Care Coordinator will be collaborating with the Department of Social Services, the Child and Family Resource Network, Brookings Area United Way, and other stakeholders to create and execute capacity building strategies. Engaging with the Brookings Early Care and Education Collaborative, the Coordinator will be working towards the goal of addressing child care accessibility issues within the community by researching and strategizing ways to support Brookings' child care supply.

Fulfilling A Community Need

The Brookings Early Care and Education (BECEC), and the BEDC in coordination with First Children's Finance completed a Brookings County Child Care Supply Plan. The plan's need analysis shows a shortage of 915 slots for children under the age of five with all parents in the workforce. There are 628 registered and licensed child care slots with an estimated need of 1,544. The report states that a portion of the need is currently supported through unregistered care, work force under-employment, and parents working different shifts. In the 2020 Brookings County Child Care Survey, respondents shared that many families would prefer licensed child care. In that same survey, respondents stated the concern of not having enough child care options and available slots. The City of Brookings surveyed organizations and citizens on the use of the ARPA funds provided to the City. Child care was on one of the top three priorities.

The Program will:

- Engage with Brookings business leaders to address the challenges of child care, such as Early Childhood Education workforce issues and family friendly work practices
- Partner with the BECEC to promote licensed care and to address barriers for child care providers within the registration process as well as assisting licensed child care programs expanded or starting new programs.
- Conduct recruitment and marketing strategies to identify new possible licensed and registered child care opportunities, including connecting with South Dakota State University's Early Childhood Education and Human Development programs.
- Develop partnerships with current registered and licensed child care programs to support the challenges they face and look to developing programs to assist with situations, such as workforce issues.
- Research at a localized level to gather the needs and challenges the Brookings area is facing. This research will include specifics of what employers consider a priority with the issue of low child care, the challenges facing child care programs and their staff, and the needs of families. This program will be assisting families in making informed decisions on child care needs.

Partnerships

The BEDC will work with community organizations to match the funds. Before the funds from the City are released commitments of matching funds at the level of 2:1 will be secured. The program will be delivered by an partner organization with the capability and talents required for success.

Outcome and Metrics of Success

The goal of the program is to add registered and licensed child care slots by 40. Licensed slots can be subsidized by the State based on an income sliding scale. Data is not available on the need for subsidized slots but the number of subsidized slots will be measured and reported.