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Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) – Request for Application 2 (RFA) for Existing Providers

Child Care Deserts Application Portal

- | | |
|---|--|
| 01. Where can I find the application portal? | The application portal can be found at: https://childcare-grants.ocfs.ny.gov/ |
| 02. What is the deadline to complete the application? | <p>The application portal opened on 07/20/2022 and will close on 08/24/2022 at 11:59 p.m. ET.</p> <p>Providers must have contacted their assigned OCFS regulator or NYC DOHMH borough office about changes to their license and initiated the process for updating program specifics, if necessary, before submitting their application. NYCDOHMH permitted Article 47 day care centers must have contacted the borough office regarding permit changes.</p> |
| 03. If I don't have all the information needed to complete my application, can I save it and complete it later? | Yes. After you have completed Step 1: General Applicant Information, and clicked the "Save and Next button" an application number will be created. Once your application number is created, you can Exit, by selecting the "Exit" button in the top right corner of the application. All applications must be submitted by 11:59:59 p.m. on 8/24/2022. |
| 04. If I withdraw my application, is it possible to submit a new application for the same facility? | No. You can only submit one application per facility ID. If you accidentally withdrew your application, you should contact your local CCRR. |
| 05. What should I do if I need to make edits to my application after it has been submitted? | Please reach out to your CCR&R or Regulator. Contact information for your CCR&R and local regional office can be found on the child care page of the OCFS website located at https://ocfs.ny.gov/programs/childcare/ |
| 06. Where can I get more information on navigating the grant application portal? | You can find step by step user guides and other training resources at https://ocfs.ny.gov/programs/childcare/deserts/existing.php |



Child Care Deserts Background Information

- 07. What are child care deserts? The Invest in NY Child Care RFA defines child care deserts as a census tract where there are 3 or more children under 5 years of age for each available child care slot, or there are no available child care slots in the census tract.
- 08. What is the purpose of the Invest in NY - Child Care Deserts Grant? New York State identified \$100M to build and expand licensed, registered, and permitted child care capacity in areas with the least supply.
- 09. Where do the funds come from? Funds for the Invest in NY – Child Care Deserts Grant RFA#2 come from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA).
- 10. How will this grant program help New Yorkers? Child care desert funding represents an unprecedented opportunity and investment to build child care capacity and strengthen the state’s economy, by addressing the issues that impact businesses including chronic absence, productivity reductions and turnover due to inadequate options for quality child care in the most needed parts of the state.
- 11. What is the age range of children being served by this grant? All ages that may be served by licensed/registered/permitted child care programs.



Grant Eligibility & Application Questions

12. Who is eligible for the Invest in NY - Child Care Deserts grant and how much is available?

This grant opportunity for \$30 million is for existing child care programs that were licensed/permitted/registered before 1/28/2022 with either OCFS or NYCDOHMH who are seeking to expand capacity under their existing license. The modalities that are eligible to apply are:

Component A: Day Care centers, including Article 47 centers and School Age Child Care programs looking to expand up to 25 additional slots within their existing license.

Component B: Small Day Care Centers, Group Family Day Care and Family Day Care home based providers that are looking to do one of the following: --1) expand program hours to include non-traditional hours of care, or 2) enroll at least one special needs child by six months after the date of the pre-approval letter, or enroll at least one infant/toddler child by six months after the date of the pre-approval letter.

To find out if you are eligible read section 3.0 of the RFA, Minimum Qualifications to Apply, section 7.0 Mandatory Award Requirements, and section 8.0, Program-Specific Requirements and Forms:

<https://ocfs.ny.gov/main/contracts/funding/RFA2/RFA2-Childcare-Deserts.pdf>

13. What can funds be used for?

Funds can be used for program development costs, short-term operating expenses, personnel costs, training, and technical assistance expenses. For more information on the use of funds read Attachment 4, List of Allowable Expenses <https://ocfs.ny.gov/main/contracts/funding/RFA2/RFA2-Att-02-Allowable-Expenses.docx>

14. When does the application period open?

The application portal opens on 07/20/2022 and will close on 08/24/2022 at 11:59 p.m. ET

Providers must have contacted their assigned OCFS regulator or NYC DOHMH borough office about changes to their license and initiated the process for updating program specifics, if necessary, before submitting their application. NYCDOHMH permitted Article 47 day care centers must have contacted the borough office regarding permit changes.

15. Is the grant first come first serve or competitive?

The grant is competitive, and grants will be scored separately by program type based on the scoring matrix that includes whether the proposed program:

- Is in a high, medium or low level of child care desert census tract
- Is in a REDC with a high medium or low rate of desert
- Is in an area with a high score on Diversity Index1



- Serves a high poverty neighborhood, as identified by the percentage of families at or below 200% Federal Poverty Level

Applicants must submit one application per facility ID in response to the RFA. Pre-approval is not a guarantee of funding, applicants must have an approved license change, if necessary, and be deemed responsible for the proposed program to be issued a formal award.

16. What should I do first if I want to apply for the grant?

If you want to apply for a grant, first review the grant requirements. You can find the full RFA here: <https://ocfs.ny.gov/main/contracts/funding/RFA2/RFA2-Childcare-Deserts.pdf>

17. What are the steps to apply?

There are four steps to the grant application process

Step 1: Review Grant Requirements

Step 2: Determine the projected expansion of the program (see Section 5.1 of the RFA for Component A and B eligible program details)

Step 3: Contact your regulator (OCFS or for NYC Article 47 programs the NYCDOHMH borough office) regarding capacity questions. Prior to applying, applicants must have initiated the process for updating changes to license.

Step 4: Grant Application Submission: Providers will complete an online application to provide details on their proposed program and how it will address child care deserts in their area of the State.

18. What are the available languages for the application?

The application is available in English, Spanish, Chinese, Russian, Yiddish, Bengali, Korean, Haitian Creole, French, Italian, Arabic, and Polish.

19. Where can I go for more information on the grant application?

For more information on the Invest in NY – Child Care Deserts Grant visit:

<https://ocfs.ny.gov/programs/childcare/deserts/existing.php>

Or read the RFA at: <https://ocfs.ny.gov/main/contracts/funding/RFA2/RFA2-Childcare-Deserts.pdf>

20. What is the difference between Component A and Component B of the RFA?

Component A of this RFA is to expand child care in existing Day Care Centers, including Day Care Centers permitted by NYC DOHMH, and in School Age Child Care programs. The goal of Component A is to **expand program licensure for up to 25 slots** in existing child care programs. Component A includes a per slot bonus for programs (up to 25 slots) who agree to designate some or all of those **new** slots for infants/toddlers and/or children with special needs.

Component B of this RFA is for Small Day Care Centers (SDCC), Family Day Care (FDC) and Group Family Day Care (GFDC). The goal of Component B is to expand **specific types of child care** within their existing programs whose enrollment is currently under their licensed capacity, specifically for





infants/toddlers, children with special needs, or expanding program hours to include nontraditional hours

21. Can a provider receive multiple awards per program?

No. Applicants must submit one application per facility ID in response to the RFA.

22. When the grant portal opens, how long will I have to apply and when will I find out if I'm awarded the grant?

The application period opens on July 20, 2022 and closes August 24, 2022 at 11:59 p.m. The anticipated date of notification of pre-approval is no earlier than September 1, 2022.

23. Are funds paid as reimbursement?

This is not a reimbursement-based grant but awarded providers are required to keep a record of how funds are used to support their child care program. Written or electronic record of all receipts must be available in case of an audit for at least 6 years following the end of the grant period.

More information on how grant funds can be used is available within Invest in NY Child Care Emergency Request for Applications (RFA) #2 for Existing Programs and [Attachment 2 - List of Allowable Expenses](#).

24. I am a current provider and I have questions about expanding my facility under my current license or changing modalities. Who is the best person to speak to about this?

Current providers who have questions about their current license should contact their regulator/licensor.

25. What constitutes a new slot?

New slots are in addition to current licensed capacity.

26. Our program would like to expand capacity, as we have families looking for care, but we are unsure how to accommodate an increased capacity in our program if we do not have the physical space to do so. I see that building expansion is not something that funds can be used for, but how can we expand our program, without physically expanding our facility?

Programs need to be eligible to expand under their current license and have the physical space to be able to do so.



27. If a SACC licensed site is currently set at 50 and we increase to 75 spots would the RFA award only cover the additional new 25 children and not the full licensed amount?

Yes, per the [RFA, Section 2.3 Purpose and Funding Availability](#), SACCs would fall under Component A. Day Care Centers/School Age Child Care: awards are calculated on a per licensed child care slot basis for increasing licensed capacity to up to 25 **new** slots.

28. Are SACC licensed after-school sites eligible?

Existing registered SACC programs are eligible to apply as long as they meet all other criteria.

29. There is a child in my care who is showing signs of having sensory deficiencies. If the infant is evaluated and obtains an IFSP, would this mean I would be eligible for RFA2?

For a child to qualify as special needs, the child needs to be a newly enrolled child, per pg. 17 "Please note: Award payments will only be made for new enrollments achieved by six months after the date of their pre-approval letter." For the purpose of this RFA, children with Special Needs is defined as children with 1. a currently approved Individual Family Services Plan (IFSP) as part of the Early Intervention program, or 2. an approved Individualized Education plan (IEP) as part of their local Committee on Special Education or 3. an approved 504 accommodation plan as part of their school district.

30. Does a registered FDC provider who previously participated in a Stars rated program need to participate in Quality Stars?

Yes, per [RFA Section 4.1 – Desired Outcomes and Program Requirements](#), Child care programs that are awarded Invest in NY Child Care Grant Program funds must apply for QUALITYstarsNY. Once selected for participation, programs must enroll and participate in QUALITYstarsNY for the duration of the grant period. Programs that receive Invest in NY Child Care funds and do not participate in QUALITYstarsNY once selected, may jeopardize their grant award. School Age Child Care (SACC) programs are not currently eligible to participate in QUALITYstarsNY, but SACC programs will be required to apply once available.

31. We are a currently licensed OCFS Day Care Center, also serving students with Special Needs. We are designated 4410 integrated Preschool. Our current program is at capacity and our area is not a designated as "a desert." If we opened another site 20 miles away in an area that is a desert, would this be considered a satellite site or a new license?

New child care locations, regardless of the parent organization, would need a child care license and would be considered a new program. All OCFS licenses are site-specific.



32. Are we eligible to apply as a legally exempt child care program? No. Providers must be a currently licensed/registered or permitted Article 47 center.

33. We are a group family day care licensed to provide care to 16 children, with only two infants in our care. The RFA says that we would need to enroll at least one infant/toddler by six months after the pre-approval letter. What letter are you referencing? How many infants and toddlers would we be able to add? The preapproval letter is sent after the application period has closed to eligible programs and awards have been made to providers that have met the pre-award requirements. This letter is not a guarantee of award, the final award amount will be determined upon licensure. All programs must comply with licensing regulations regarding capacity and staff ratios. GFDCs may add as many infants/toddlers as their licensed capacity and staffing allows. For purposes of this funding opportunity, such programs only need to add one infant or toddler, and that slot needs to be filled 6 months after pre-approval.

34. Our current SACC license capacity is 141 students and we normally do not hit our threshold. I saw on the requirements that we have to expand our capacity by 25. Does this mean we have to increase our SACC license capacity by 25 or just take on an additional 25 students? The Child Care Desert grant RFA #2 for SACCs is for new slots, in addition to the current registered capacity. The grant is not based on enrollment, except for the special needs bonus.

35. In the RFA “5.2 Application Content” it appears that there is a section called “Program Application Questions (Up to 100 Points)” but there are no questions listed below. Will there be additional narrative questions that applicants will need to answer? The application does not include narrative questions.

36. Can our program apply for a license change to increase our capacity even if we do not have full enrollment at our current capacity? Will recipients be penalized if they do not reach full enrollment, assuming they Programs are eligible for RFA#2 if they are able to expand to add new slots on their existing license. Payment of the base amount is not based on enrollment. However, enrollment of infant/toddlers or special needs children in any slots designated for bonus awards must be achieved by six months after the date of their pre-approval letter to continue to receive bonus payments.



are open and fully staffed? If so, what will the penalty be?

37. Can you help me figure out who is my assigned OCFS Regulator?

Please reach out to [your local Regional Office or CCR&R](#) to determine the specific regulator for your program.

38. Our SACC after-school license is in a charter school, is this program eligible to apply?

All licensed/registered/permitted Article 47 programs who are currently licensed are eligible to apply if they are able to meet the requirements of the grant.

39. Do all home base daycare's have to obtain workers compensation/disability insurance? If so can we wait until we get approved for the grant?

Proof of insurance will need to be uploaded to the Application after license approval and prior to grant award for daycares receiving awards of \$100,000 or above. Please refer to [RFA Section 7.2 - Workers Compensation Insurance and Disability Benefits Proof of Coverage Form](#) . Sections 57 and 220 of the Workers' Compensation Law (WCL) and section 142 of the State Finance Law require that businesses contracting with New York State have and maintain and provide evidence of appropriate workers' compensation and disability benefits insurance coverage. Failure to submit the proof will delay the grant award and may result in the award being rescinded. Municipalities are not required to show proof of coverage.

40. I am a licensed GFDC. My program is closed for the summer and my current group of students ends next week. I will be reopening on September 1st and as of now, I have a few spots available. Am I eligible for Component B of the grant?

Please review [RFA Section 2.1 Introduction/Description of Program Objectives and Background](#), component B:

Component B: Small Day Care Centers (SDCC), Family Day Care (FDC)/ Group Family Day Care (GFDC) Component B of this RFA is to expand specific types of child care within existing programs whose enrollment is currently under their licensed capacity, specifically for infants/toddlers, children with special needs, or expanding program hours to include nontraditional hours.

Child care program modalities eligible under Component B are only Small Day Care Centers, Family Day Care providers and Group Family Day Care providers. Slots designated for infant/toddlers or children with special needs must have children enrolled by six months after the date of their pre-approval letter to continue to receive payments. If enrollment is not achieved by six months after the date of their pre-approval letter, programs will not receive payments again until children are enrolled in the designated infant/toddler and/or special needs slots.

Please also review [RFA Section 3.1 - Minimum Qualifications to Apply](#).





41. I see that my program is not considered to be in a childcare desert, but we are a short distance away from an area that is. Could we be eligible based on serving children from an area that is a desert?

Score is based on physical location of the program, not children served. Your program location and/or your regional desert level must be sufficient to achieve a minimum base score of 30 to be eligible for funding.



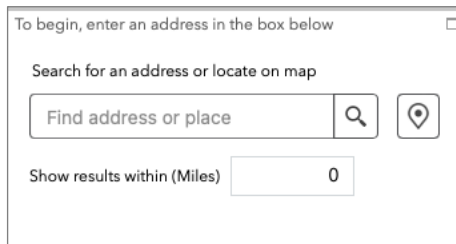
Understanding the REDC Child Care Deserts Map

42. How do I know if my area is in a child care desert?

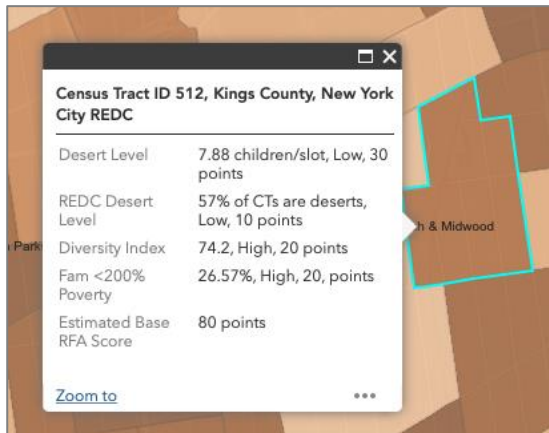
To view child care deserts in New York State, visit the REDC Child Care Deserts map: https://bit.ly/cc_deserts

43. How do I search the map?

You can type your site address into the “Find address or place” box in the upper left-hand corner of the map.



You can also click on the image of New York and zoom in on a particular area for more information.



44. Where can I go for more information on how to read the REDC Child Care Deserts Map?

For more information on the REDC Child Care Desert Map you can view the user guide and video here:

- [REDC Child Care Desert Map User Guide](#)
- [How to Use the REDC Child Care Desert Map Video](#)

45. I can't find my desert level by typing in my zip code. Why is that?

In some cases, you may need to be more specific and include the full address of the site. Census tract boundaries do not correspond to zip code boundaries. A census tract might have one zip code or many, and a zip code might cross census tract boundaries. Click on the links below for further instructions

- [REDC Child Care Desert Map User Guide](#)
- [How to Use the REDC Child Care Desert Map Video](#)



- 46. Do I have to use the map in order to apply for the grant?
Use of the map by an applicant is optional but will be used by OCFS to determine if the program location is eligible to apply. A minimum base score of 30 is required to be eligible for funding. See [REDC Child Care Desert Map User Guide](#) for instructions.
- 47. What do you consider downstate?
Downstate is considered the New York City, Long Island (Nassau and Suffolk counties), and the Westchester region (Dutchess, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Sullivan, Ulster, and Westchester counties).
- 48. The map doesn't show the Fam<200% estimate for my proposed location. Why is that?
The map reflects data on the number of families with income under 200% of the poverty level from the U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 5-year estimates, 2015-19. If there were no Census data on number of families or income in a census tract, a percentage could not be calculated. For the RFA, such census tracts received a "low" poverty score category for 6 points toward the Estimated Base RFA score.
- 49. I wanted to inquire about the nature of the Estimated Base RFA Score as calculated in the NYS Child Care Deserts Map. Where did the data come from that was used to create the map?
The Child Care Desert map that was produced by the Council on Children and Families and the Office of Children and Family Services was released publicly in January 2022 and is being utilized for both grant programs. Available child care slots used for this analysis include infant, toddler, and preschooler slots in licensed day care centers and NYCDOHMH permitted (Article 47 programs only) group day care programs, as well as 6 weeks to 12-year-old slots in licensed group family day care, based on licensed capacity as of October 2021.



Grant Awards & Scoring

50. I used the map, and my base score is 65. Is this high enough to qualify for the grant to expand my program?

Higher scores in child care deserts may be more likely to qualify for funding. However, funding is based on an application’s total score compared to the total scores of other applications received in the same region and modality. Providers with a minimum base score of 30 are eligible to apply.

51. Does my child care center have to be located within a child care desert to qualify?

Yes. Your program location and/or your regional desert level must be sufficient to achieve a minimum base score of 30 to be eligible for funding.

52. If my base score is 50 points does that mean I have a 50% chance of getting the grant?

No. The Estimated Base score points on the map does not indicate percent chance of receiving an award. Completed applications will be scored via the answers provided on electronic application. Award recommendations will be made in score order to all eligible providers out of the funding available for each program type and region. After the application submission deadline, applications will be ranked in final average score order (from highest to lowest) within each region and modality. Awards will be made in score order (from highest to lowest) to programs until funding is exhausted. A minimum base score of 30 is required to be eligible to apply.

53. I’m trying to understand the process. If I have a medium point score of like 57 points, does that mean I would get a potentially smaller grant?

No. The grant amounts are set amounts or amounts per slot for Component A programs and set amounts per program for Component B programs for each modality (program type) and region.

54. How will awards be decided if several applications with the same point value, from the same community are submitted?

Funding will be awarded to eligible programs based on scores, modality and location as explained in Section 6.2 Evaluation Process.

If there are tie scores among applicants, ties will be resolved by awarding in date/time order of application submission.

