

**Burlington Early Learning Initiative  
2017–2018 Grant Guidelines  
Extended Application Deadline**

**INTRODUCTION**

The Burlington Early Learning Initiative aims to expand access to high-quality child care for Burlington children.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

After several years of planning, in Fiscal Year 2018, the City of Burlington launched its Early Learning Initiative (ELI) with the short-term goal of expanding the number of high-quality child care opportunities available in Burlington for children ages birth to three, and the long-term goal of ensuring that all Burlington children have the opportunity to succeed regardless of family income level. The program seeks to address the fact that low-income Burlington children are disproportionately likely to be behind by the time they enter kindergarten, to experience a widening achievement gap in later grades, and are more likely to experience a range of negative outcomes later in life including reduced educational achievements, higher rates of chronic health problems, higher rates of incarceration and drug misuse, and lower lifetime earnings (*Burlington Beginnings White Paper*, Nordhaus, 2015).

To achieve the short-term goal, the City of Burlington is offering grants to increase the availability of high quality child care for infants and toddlers, through expanding or increasing the quality of existing child care, or starting new high-quality child care programs. Vermont Birth to Five (VB5), a project of the Permanent Fund for Vermont's Children, estimates that there are 608 infants and toddlers likely to need care living in Burlington, while there are an estimated 236 high-quality enrollment slots for children under the age of three in Burlington. VB5 will oversee and administer the grant program on behalf of the City of Burlington, with guidance from an advisory committee. The mission of VB5 is to ensure that every Vermont child has access to high-quality, affordable early care and learning by 2025.

**GRANT INFORMATION Purpose**

The ELI grants will fund projects that increase the availability of high-quality infant and toddler child care slots for children from Burlington families of all income levels.

**Who Can Apply**

- Organizations or agencies that currently operate or plan to operate a licensed child care program within the city of Burlington
- Currently registered family child care programs planning to expand to a licensed program within the city of Burlington
- Individuals planning to open a registered family child care home in the city of Burlington

**Proposal Eligibility Requirements**

1. Proposed projects must be located Burlington.
2. Applicants must serve or plan to serve children ages birth to three.

3. Applicants must be high-quality programs (defined by 4 or 5 stars in Vermont's STep Ahead Recognition System [STARS]) or have a clear plan to become high-quality (achieve at least 4 stars).
4. Applicants must enroll or plan to enroll children who receive funding through the Child Care Financial Assistance Program (CCFAP) in newly created child care slots at a threshold of at least 20%.
5. Applicants must have or plan to obtain Specialized Child Care status.
6. Applicants must have or plan to have an employee compensation package that meets the [Burlington Livable Wage Ordinance](#).

### Grant Items Eligible for Funding

- Construction and capital improvements to public or commercial buildings to allow for additional infant and toddler care within the child care site. Family child care homes are not eligible to apply for major renovations or additions unless *flagged by child care licensing* as a need to meet health and safety requirements to serve infants and toddlers (i.e., egress for exit or stairway, or changes related to supervision improvements).
- Specific program quality improvement efforts to achieve 4 or 5 stars.
- Program changes/improvements to increase total number of infant and toddlers served at the program.
- Items needed to support early learning environments, physical health and the wellbeing of additional children served in newly created child care slots (e.g., cribs, changing tables, outdoor play equipment, literacy materials, learning toys, etc.).
- Training and compensation costs related to workforce development and expansion.

### Grant Amounts

Applicants may apply for funds at the following levels:

- Licensed Center Based Early Childhood Programs may apply for up to \$50,000.
- Registered/Licensed Family Child Care Homes may apply for up to \$10,000.

The total grant pool is \$460,000. The City of Burlington expects to fund six to ten projects of a variety of sizes. Funding at higher levels than outlined above may be considered for exceptional project proposals as identified during consultation process between VB5 and prospective applicant. VB5 will bring recommendations for higher funding to the grant review committee for final recommendations to the Mayor.

The grant process is competitive and applications will be evaluated based on several criteria, including: amount of funds requested; number of new slots created; cost per new slot created; number of CCFAP children served; viability and sustainability of project; and prior experience of applicant.

### How to Apply

- **Meet with a VB5 Project Consultant for an information session.** A VB5 consultant must determine if the applicant and funding request meet the grant qualifications prior to an applicant submitting a grant application. Interested candidates can contact Didi Harris ([didi@vermontbirthtofive.org](mailto:didi@vermontbirthtofive.org)) to schedule a meeting.

- **Submit Grant Application by March 15, 2018.** A link to an electronic grant application form will be provided to applicants who have submitted a letter of intent and been determined to meet the grant eligibility criteria.

#### **APPLICATION CHECK LIST**

- ✓ Meet with VB5 consultant prior to completing grant application
- ✓ Complete entire application
- ✓ Project budget and narrative including other funding sources
- ✓ Estimate or bid for construction projects (if applicable)
- ✓ Prior years' financial statements
- ✓ Business plan