The Capacity Grant Program is managed by Children & Families First, through a contract overseen by the Delaware Department of Health and Social Services. The grant monies come to Delaware through the federal Child Development Block Grant. The Capacity Grant awards are intended to provide quality improvement technical assistance strategies and grant resources to licensed child care programs that to meet certain criteria outlined in this document.

Section 1: Targeted Funding Categories
The Capacity Grant awards must enhance the quality of care in programs, and/or build the supply of quality child care that is in limited supply in one or all of the following “target” areas:

- Children who need care during non-traditional hours (defined as care provided during at least one of the following time blocks: 1) a minimum of one hour prior to 7:00 a.m., and/or 2) a minimum of one hour after 6:00 p.m., and/or 3) care needed on weekends);
- Children who are English language learners;
- Children with special needs (defined as children with an IFSP, IEP, 504, or behavioral or mental health plan as outlined by a specialist);
- Infants and toddlers (defined as birth up to 36 months).

Section 2: Eligibility Requirements—Mandatory Criteria
The Capacity Grant is available to licensed child care programs throughout the state of Delaware. The grant has a particular emphasis on serving children from low-income families in identified high needs areas. In order to be considered for funding, child care programs:

- Must have a valid annual license issued by the Office of Child Care Licensing with no current enforcement actions.
- Must accept Purchase of Care (POC) through a contract with the Division of Social Services and must meet certain POC percentage enrollment criteria. Refer to Section 3 for stipulations about POC enrollment as a percentage of overall enrollment.
- Must be enrolled in the Delaware Stars Program and engaged in quality improvement efforts, prior to receiving grant resources. Engagement must be Star-Level appropriate per Delaware Stars Letter of Expectations and Partnership Agreements.
- Must not have been approved for Capacity Grant funds within the prior 24 months (time period is calculated based on Advisory Committee approval dates)—check with Capacity Grant Program Manager or TA if you need to have this date checked before you apply.
- Must be in good standing with CACFP, POC, Delaware Stars and other Capacity Grant partners.
  o Standings reports are gathered by Capacity Grant staff from all involved partner agencies. Poor standings can result in deferral or denial of the Capacity Grant application.
- If applying for funding in the target area of “children with special needs,” must have current IEP, IFSP, 504 or behavioral or mental health plan on file, and must link funding request to materials or services needed to enhance the accommodations of children enrolled with identified special needs.
The application must be completed in its entirety—Capacity Grant Technical Assistants (TAs) are available to support programs with the completion of their application packet. (see Section #6 for further details on TA support)

The application must include a detailed plan (known as the “Proposal Narrative”) indicating the need for funding that includes specifics on how the funding will be used, and how the improvements or enhancements will create slots or enhance ability to provide care for infants and toddlers, children with special needs, children who need care during non-traditional hours, and/or children who are English language learners. (see Appendix A of the application for details about the “Proposal Narrative)

**Please note: meeting the above criteria does not automatically ensure the approval of the application.** Approval may also be impacted by factors outlined in Section 4 below.

**Section 3: POC Enrollment Criteria and High Needs Areas**
The Capacity Grant project seeks to expand or enhance care that is safe, healthy, and appropriate, with an emphasis on serving children from low-income families in identified high needs areas.

Note: **Programs must accept POC and meet one of the following criteria:**

- Be in a designated high needs area (see section below) AND have at least 50% POC enrollment, OR
- If located outside a designated high needs area the program must have at least 75% POC enrollment.

High needs areas are identified as follows:
- Wilmington River Area, Center City of Wilmington, Western Wilmington (zip codes including: 19703, 19801, 19802, 19803, 19804, parts of 19805, 19806 and 19809)
- Southern Dover (zip codes including: parts of 19901, 19904 and 19934)
- Southern Kent/Northern Sussex (zip codes including: 19933, 19941, 19950, 19952, 19954, 19960, 19963, 19946, and parts of 19943 and 19968)
- Georgetown area (zip codes including parts of 19947 and 19966)
- Western Sussex (zip codes including: 19973, 19931, 19956, 19940, 19945, and parts of 19945 and 19966)
- Eastern Sussex (zip codes including: 19945, 19975, 19967 19944, 19970, 19939, and parts of 19966)

**Based on availability of funding, and certain unique circumstances (such as the COVID-19 pandemic) the criteria relating to POC enrollment and high needs areas may be adjusted by the Capacity Grant Advisory Committee.**

**Section 4: Funding Priority**
The mandatory criteria noted in Sections 2 and 3 must be meet in order to be considered for potential funding. The overall composition of the applicant pool for a particular application “round” is also taken into account as funding decisions are made, with the following factors examined by the Capacity Grant Advisory Committee:

- **High Needs areas and POC enrollment:** Programs serving the highest percentage of POC-enrolled children, and located in identified high needs areas will receive higher priority (see Section #3 for details).
- **Targeted funding categories:** In order to ensure an equitable distribution of funds across all target areas (Non-traditional hours, English Language Learners, Children with Special Needs, and Infants and Toddlers) and throughout the State, some applications may be deferred for future application rounds.
- **Star Level with Delaware Stars:** Programs at lower Star Levels may receive higher priority, with the other priority areas and criteria also being considered.
Section 5: Funding Award Levels and Examples of Materials/Resources to Consider

Award amounts range from $2,000 to $6,000. This funding range is subject to change based on availability of overall Capacity Grant funds. Actual amount awarded is based on factors including program type and enrollment numbers. Programs should contact their Capacity Grant TA or the Program Manager with specific questions about the potential funding amount for their program.

The Capacity Grant will only be awarded to programs where the funds are essential to improve quality and increase or enhance availability of care in at least one of the four target areas identified in Section #1. Materials and other resources provided to programs will be required to meet Delaware Stars Standards and/or Environment Rating Scales (ERS) indicators.

Examples of materials that will be considered under the grant:

- Classroom furnishings:
  - Example: child accessible cubbies, low shelving units, appropriate child-sized tables and chairs, cribs, high chairs, changing tables
- Curriculum, assessment or developmental screening components/kits (approved through Delaware Stars/OEL)
- Educational materials:
  - Example: books, blocks, block accessory sets, materials to enhance learning in math, science, language arts, sand & water play, music, movement and other educational materials tied to the ERS standards
- Adult furniture for routine care
  - Example: feeding chair, gliders, rocking chair
- Technology for teacher’s use
  - Example: computer, camera, printer
- Soft equipment for the physical environment which could be used by all children, including children who have special needs
- Toys and materials that would encourage inclusion for children with special needs and/or address specific areas of an IEP, IFSP, 504, or behavioral or mental health plan
- Outdoor play equipment that does not need to be anchored

Examples of professional development that will be considered under the grant:

- Professional development that is quality assured through DIEEC (Delaware Institute for Excellence in Early Childhood)
- TECE 1 & 2; online CDA training
- College credits as decided by committee

Examples of other uses for funds:

- Services that will improve efficiency in operations
- Short-term therapy for children

Examples of materials that will NOT be considered under the grant:

- Items that will confine a child, or not encourage active engagement (swings, strollers, bucket-seat tables, bouncy seats, etc.)
- Adult furniture not intended for routine care, such as desks and chairs
- Consumables (food, craft/art materials, office consumables such as copy paper)
- Construction
- Outdoor surfacing, poured-in-place, mulch
Section 6: Technical Assistance
On-site technical assistance (TA) by one of our Capacity Grant TAs is highly recommended PRIOR to submitting the application, in order to support a program throughout their application process. Programs should contact the Capacity Grant Program Manager to make arrangements for TA support prior to submitting their application.

Each program that submits an application will be assigned a Capacity Grant Technical Assistant (TA). All programs submitting an application are required to participate in site visits and a “needs assessment” by a Capacity Grant Technical Assistant prior to the final award decision. The needs assessment will also include input and collaboration with the programs Delaware Stars TA. The needs assessment will enable the Capacity Grant TA to support the program in determining appropriate resources to request, which will ultimately be placed on a “Resource Request List” for consideration by the Capacity Grant Advisory Committee.

The frequency and length of each TA visit (involving the Capacity Grant TA) will vary based on the need(s) being addressed. Technical assistance may be offered in areas such as (but not limited to): support with completion of application documents; needs assessment; inventorying of new materials; support with planning around administrative policies and general business management; staff retention and performance management; classroom management.

Section 7: Selection & Award Process
Grant awards will be considered for approval, and final decisions made, by the Capacity Grant Advisory Committee led by Children & Families First and the Division of Health & Social Services. The committee is comprised of stakeholders and partners from the early childhood community. Selection and approval for grant funding will be based on the requirements and priorities outlined in Section 1 through 5, as well as:

- Availability of funding
- Availability of a Technical Assistant
- Determination at “needs assessment” visit. All programs will receive a “needs assessment” visit prior to the final decision to provide Technical Assistance and provide resources.

Section 8: Application Deadline & Submission
- ***Application deadlines will be posted on our website: www.cffde.org
- Applications must be received at Children & Families First no later than the TIME and DATE posted on the website: www.cffde.org
- Applications can be delivered in person, faxed, emailed or sent via regular mail (see further details in the box on the last page of these Guidelines).
- Amendments to deadline time and methods of delivering completed applications may occur due to unforeseen circumstances, and will be communicated as efficiently as possible to potential applicants.
- Applications that are incomplete or incorrectly filled out will be returned to the applicant and may be re-submitted before the deadline.
- For multiple program sites, one application per site is required.
- Children & Families First may request clarification and/or further information from the program.

Contact the Capacity Grant Program Manager with questions:
Andrea Prettyman
(302) 233-6475 andrea.prettyman@cffde.org
**Applications and all accompanying items must be received at Children & Families First no later than the deadline date & time posted on www.cffde.org**

Applications can be sent as follows:

Mail: Attention: Andrea Prettyman, Capacity Grant
Children & Families First
91 Wolf Creek Blvd., Suite 1
Dover, DE 19901

Fax: (855) 295-5331

Email: andrea.prettyman@cffde.org

Hand-delivering your application:
You can hand-deliver your application to your Capacity Grant TA if you have been working with one. If you would like to hand-deliver to one of the Children & Families First offices, please make sure that option is listed on the application, and call the office ahead of time to ensure it will be open during your intended drop-off time. If hand-delivering to an office, be sure to hand it to a front-desk employee at one of the following Children & Families First offices. Please write “Attention to.....” as per details below:

New Castle County: **Attention: Romisha Robinson, Capacity Grant
Children & Families First, 809 Washington St., Wilmington, DE 19801

Kent County: **Attention: Andrea Prettyman, Capacity Grant
Children & Families First, 91 Wolf Creek Blvd, Suite 1, Dover, DE 19901

Sussex County: **Attention: Andrea Prettyman, Capacity Grant
Children & Families First, 410 S. Bedford St., Georgetown, DE 19947