



2024 MINI Room for Me Grant

Maintaining Capacity and Quality for Afterschool,
School Vacation, and Summer Learning Programs

Request for Proposals

Published: January 3, 2024

Applications accepted on a rolling basis between:

January 3, 2024, 9 AM EST - May 31, 2024, 5 PM EST

Award Notification: Within 2 weeks of application submission

Vermont Afterschool
150 Kennedy Drive
South Burlington, VT 05403

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I. INTRODUCTION

Vermont Afterschool is proud to continue working with the Vermont Department for Children and Families' Child Development Division (CDD). Together, we are continuing to support programs with the Room For Me Grant toward smaller, ready-to-go projects.

We have just over \$150,000.00 remaining in federal funding to be made available through June 2024. Over the next six months, we will accept and review applications for a Mini Room For Me Grant on a rolling basis.

The Mini Room For Me Grants are aimed at maintaining slots that have been recently created or opened, to assist in keeping them available and accessible. Projects can be maintenance work, repair work, quality improvement, or aligned with STARS assessment needs. These funds are ideal for small projects that are already in the planning stages to maintain or mitigate impact on programs and slots.

Since the first round of Room For Me grants were awarded across Vermont in January 2023, programs have added over 400 slots for school age children (5–12) across Summer and Afterschool. 190 Summer and Afterschool hours, 90 days, and over 20 weeks in total have been added. The collective effort of these grants and providers in the field has made a big impact with the creation of these additional slots and expansion activities. Families are able to rely on a regular schedule, maintain work schedules as needed, and know that consistent and quality care is available for their children.

Many community partnerships have been built and fostered with the Room For Me Grant, an important component in our collective work toward realizing the goal of Universal Afterschool in Vermont. Vermont Afterschool would like to continue with this work until all the Room For Me Grant funds have been used to impact Vermont youth, their families, and their communities.

We encourage you to apply with a project in mind that is ready to be implemented and will help your program maintain slots, quality, or improve your STARS rating.

Fall 2022 Room For Me Grant applicants/grantees are eligible to apply for this grant opportunity.

A. Grant Purpose

This grant is designed to:

- Maintain the amount of school-age child care slots that are available or have newly opened across the state of Vermont through;
 - Small maintenance, installation, and repair projects aimed at maintaining slots
 - Projects may include minor remodeling, equipment, materials, or increased levels of staffing (e.g., hiring, training, or increased or extended staffing hours)
 - Quality improvement purchases (equipment, supplies)
 - Improvement of STARS rating
 - Single projects or multiple smaller projects
 - Short- or long-term projects (Note: expenses will not be reimbursed if they occur after the grant period is over)

II. FUNDING AVAILABLE AND GRANT AWARDS

At least \$150,000 in Child Care and Development Block Grant funding supported by American Rescue Plan (ARPA) investments is available for 2022–2024 awards.

Maximum grant requests may be up to \$10,000 regardless of program size.

Applicants and awardees of the Mini Room For Me Grant can apply more than once. The maximum award amount will not exceed \$10,000.00, regardless of the number of Mini grants awarded.

Vermont Afterschool is working closely with, and at the direction of, CDD. Vermont Afterschool holds the right to make award decisions based on added criteria. These can include and are not limited to geographic location, fiscal risk analysis, non-compliance with past awards, and/or failure to respond with information requests.

III. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

To be eligible, a program must:

- Be an existing regulated, center-based child care or afterschool program, or family child care home in good regulatory standing with the Vermont Child Care Licensing regulations specific to the type of program being operated.

- Provide the option to enroll children/families eligible for and participating in [CDD's Child Care Financial Assistance Program \(CCFAP\)](#).
- Provide child care for school age children (ages 5-12) for at least 42 weeks of the year.
- Propose a type of project that is aimed at maintaining its number of child care slots, its program, or improving its program quality in alignment with STARS assessments or other quality improvement needs.

IV. 2024 MINI GRANT APPLICATION TIMELINE

Task	Date(s)
RFP Published	January 3, 2024
Questions Open	<p>January 3, 2024 through May 31, 2024</p> <p>Please submit questions about completing this application here: https://www.cognitofrms.com/vermontafterschool/_2024miniroomformegrantquestions</p> <p>Questions will be answered within 24 hours during regular business hours here: https://bit.ly/MINIRFM2024FAQ</p>
Rolling Applications Open	<p>January 3, 2024, 9 AM EST – May 31, 2024, 5 PM EST</p> <p>Complete and submit electronic application here: https://www.cognitofrms.com/vermontafterschool/_2024miniroomformegrantapplication</p>
Award Notifications	Made within two weeks of receiving the application
Program/Award Period	Grant award notification through June 28, 2024
Final Reporting Due	July 12, 2024

V. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

A. Financial Reporting and Reimbursement Process

Grantees will receive funds through a reimbursement process. Vermont Afterschool agrees to reimburse the grantee for services they perform up to the maximum amount stated in their grant agreement. Services provided must be within the purpose of the grant and are authorized under the terms and conditions of the grant.

The grantee will provide, at minimum, one financial reimbursement report, or monthly, as needed. This will be determined on a case-by-case basis at the financial one-on-one session with the grant coordinator upon awarding the grant. Financial reports will be accompanied by supporting documents (i.e., invoices and receipts). The final date for all Mini Room For Me grantees to submit financial reports and supporting documentation is July 12, 2024. Expenditures cannot be made after June 28, 2024, the final day of the grant period, these will not be reimbursed.

Financial reports will contain eligible reimbursable costs incurred in carrying out the purpose(s) of the program. Upon receipt of the report, Vermont Afterschool staff will review reimbursement requests for completion and accuracy. The report will be returned for correction if there are any errors, inconsistencies, or questions on expenses. The need for correction and further communication may result in a delay in your reimbursement.

Reimbursements to grantees will be disbursed when Vermont Afterschool receives funds from the CDD. Once financial reports and supporting documents are approved, grantees will be paid within 30–60 days.

B. General Payment Information

The maximum dollar amount awarded to each grantee under this grant is not intended to guarantee the amount of payment. The grantee will be paid for services performed up to the maximum allowed amount. Unless amended, this is a one-time grant award for the amount indicated. There are no assurances of continued funding beyond this grant term. The grantee should monitor their expenses and invoices. No payment beyond the maximum total grant amount will be made.

VI. ALLOWABLE USE OF FUNDS

There are two types of expenses and activities that are allowable under this grant:

- A. Reimbursable for up to 6–8 consecutive weeks only:**
 - Salaries and fringe benefits; to provide additional hours or days of service that otherwise go unprovided.
 - (i.e., employer paid taxes, company paid benefits to employees, etc.).

- Once enrollment and Child Care Financial Assistance Program reimbursements support this cost, it is no longer reimbursable.
- Healthy snacks and meals that comply with the USDA Afterschool Program and Summer Food Service Program nutrition meal pattern.
 - Once enrollment funds support this cost, it is no longer reimbursable.

B. Reimbursable for the full length of the grant period:

- Costs linked with expansion and/or maintenance of an existing program: number of days, hours, or weeks, number of children served, staff, activities, adding a site, etc.
- Costs linked with creating a new program in a community where few or no options currently exist
- 1099 contractors
- Accounting or consulting services directly related to the financial operations of the grant
- Consultants, subcontractors, and evaluators
- Program materials and supplies (eCFR :: 2 CFR 200.1 -- Definitions) related to expanding the number of school-age child care slots
- Equipment related to expanding and/or maintaining the number of school-age child care slots eCFR :: 2 CFR 200.1 -- Definitions
- Costs linked with developing and/or creating new partnerships with community-based organizations, municipalities, higher education, businesses and/or schools
- Advertisements, promotional, and marketing items for community outreach tied with the expansion and/or availability of program slots and opportunities
- Capital improvements and permanent renovations
 - Use this guidance on allowable construction as outlined in the Code of Federal Regulations
 - Allowable funding can include minor renovations and projects to non-structural walls, new flooring, plumbing etc., and outdoor structures, sitework, survey fees, permitting, design, and initiative funding

VII. UNALLOWABLE USE OF FUNDS

The following activities and expenses are not allowed and are not reimbursable:

- Costs incurred or paid before the start or after the end of the grant period (January 3, 2024 – June 28, 2024)

- Scholarships or subsidies
- Incentives including plaques, trophies, stickers, certificates, t-shirts (unless approved and purchased for safety reasons for field trips), and give-a-ways
- Gift cards
- Field trips purely for entertainment purposes
- Unapproved out-of-state or overnight field trips, including retreats, lock-ins, etc.
- End-of-year celebrations or food for parties or socials
- Decorative items
- Purchase of facilities and vehicles (e.g., buses, vans, cars) or land acquisition
- Dues to organizations, federations, or societies for personal benefits
- Interest expenses
- Direct labor and subcontract costs for remodeling or construction
- Major renovations, new buildings or major additions to buildings, foundation changes, roof replacements, etc.

IMPORTANT NOTE: This is not an all-inclusive list of allowable and unallowable expenses. [2 C.F.R. §§ 200.420-475](#) lists general allowability for selected items of costs. If you have questions about whether an expense is allowable or unallowable, please submit them here:

https://www.cognitofrms.com/vermontafterschool/_2024miniroomformegrantquestions

Questions and answers will be made accessible here: <https://bit.ly/MINIRFM2024FAQ>.

VIII. MONITORING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Monitoring and technical assistance opportunities are essential. They can set your programs up for success and ensure your grant goals are being met on time. Vermont Afterschool will be accessible throughout the grant period for support and guidance.

The goals of monitoring and technical assistance are to recognize areas of strength and areas for continued growth. Our collective goal we aim to achieve is to provide exceptional programming for Vermont's youth.

A. Monitoring

Monitoring activities for grantees may include emails, phone calls, virtual meetings, and on-site visits. Grantees may be monitored on topics such as, but not limited to staffing, effectively maintaining the health and safety of youth and staff, training and development, transportation, general strengths, challenges, and compliance with the grant agreement.

Grantees will submit one narrative performance report throughout the time of this grant. This report will include data on the following: total number of children served; total number of slots; data on their other measurable outcomes; lessons learned; challenges and successes. Additional data may be required.

The narrative report will be due on April 5, 2024 (for a grant period of January, February, and March 2024) or July 5 (for a grant period of April, May, and June 2024), depending on when the grant is awarded and the expenses occur.

B. Technical Assistance

Grantees will be required to attend a virtual Financial Management session with the grant coordinator after the award has been granted. This will be held before grant expenditures can occur. Check-ins will be held as needed to provide grantees with updates, best practices, technical support, and resources. Other technical assistance opportunities may be scheduled by Vermont Afterschool throughout the grant period.

Contact information for your grant coordinator will be made available before the beginning of your grant period.

IX. GRANT APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION

Complete and submit the electronic application here:

https://www.cognitofrms.com/vermontafterschool/_2024miniroomformegrantapplication

Submit questions about completing this application here:

https://www.cognitofrms.com/vermontafterschool/_2024miniroomformegrantquestions

X. REVIEW PROCESS AND CRITERIA

Grant applications will be scored using the Scoring Rubric found in Appendix A. Vermont Afterschool will collaborate with a team of reviewers who have expertise in a variety of backgrounds. These include afterschool and summer learning; youth development; diversity, equity, and inclusion; health; child care; grants and grant making; higher education; K–12 education; community schools; and profit and nonprofit organizations.

Each proposal will be reviewed and scored by multiple reviewers. Vermont Afterschool will ensure there are no reviewers scoring proposals from programs/organizations where they serve as staff, board, volunteer, or consultant or have any other conflict of interest. We will

guide the review process and provide the teams a platform to meet and make their recommendations.

Priority points will be awarded to programs/organizations that serve youth in the following Vermont counties: Bennington, Essex, Franklin, Grand Isle, Orange, Orleans, or Windham County. Please be sure to answer this question in the cover page of the application to receive the points.

XI. ELIGIBILITY ASSURANCES

You must be able to check 'Yes' to each of the following eligibility assurances in order to be eligible for consideration of a Mini Room For Me Grant.

1. Be a new or existing regulated, center-based child care, afterschool program, or family child care home in good regulatory standing.

Yes No

2. Provide the option to enroll children/families eligible for and participating in [CDD's Child Care Financial Assistance Program \(CCFAP\)](#).

Please follow the link to read more about CCFAP if you are not familiar with it

Yes No

3. Provide child care for school-age children (ages 5–12) for at least 42 weeks of the year.

Yes No

4. Be in good regulatory standing with the Vermont Child Care Licensing regulations specific to the type of program being operated.

Yes No

5. Propose a type of project that is aimed at maintaining their number of child care slots, maintaining their program, or improving their program quality in alignment with STARS assessments or other quality improvement needs.

Yes No

Signature of Designated Official

Title

Date

Name



XII. 2024 MINI ROOM FOR ME GRANT APPLICATION

Coversheet

Name of Organization/Program Name: _____

Year Agency Founded: _____

Number of Years of Service: _____

Mission Statement: _____

Previous Grant History: _____

Project Director: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____

ZIP: _____

County: _____

Program Location (*if different from above*): _____

Contact Name: _____

Contact Phone #: _____

Contact E-mail: _____

Current Annual Budget - total annual operating budget (whole numbers only) for current fiscal year: _____

This project serves children and youth in Bennington, Essex, Franklin, Grand Isle, Orange, Orleans, or Windham County (**5 Priority Points**)

State of Vermont Child Care License Number: _____

If this is something you will be working toward during the grant period, please state that here.

Unique Entity Id (UEI) (SAM): (A SAM UEI # replaces the previous DUNS system and is required. If you have applied for one but have not received your number at the time of application, please indicate that and submit to Vermont Afterschool when assigned.):

Federal EIN #: _____

VT Tax ID #: _____

Website for program or organization (put n/a if you don't have one): _____

Title of Project/Program: _____

Grant Purpose (a two-sentence explanation of the grant project):

Amount of Funding Requested: _____

Mini Room for Me Grant awards is up to a maximum of \$10,000.00

The amount requested here should match the requested amount in your budget for this project.

Are you a (select one):

- Family child care (home-based) provider
- Child care center, school, business, municipality, or other agency

Program Assurances

(Please check each one and sign in the space provided below):

Recipients of grant funding shall:

- not discriminate in admission, employment, or administration of its programs or activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, handicap or disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, creed, ancestry, belief, veteran status, or genetic information
- be a new or existing regulated, center-based child care or afterschool program or family child care home serving school-aged (5–12) children, youth, and families in Vermont;
- be in good regulatory standing with the Vermont Child Care Licensing regulations specific to the type of program being operated or if you are a new program, licensing will be pursued in the first year;
- offer low or no-cost options for eligible students;
- provide appropriately trained, certified, and/or licensed staff;
- participate in Vermont Afterschool's Room for Me grant monitoring and technical support;
- follow all applicable health guidance;

- ensure that healthy snacks and meals are available, and that they comply with the USDA Afterschool Program, Summer Food Service Program and nutrition meal pattern;
- comply with the requirements set forth in eCFR :: 2 CFR Part 200 -- Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards;
- certify that, if utilizing another federal funding stream for any expenses, this grant will not also be charged;
- submit performance reports as defined above;
- comply with all laws and regulations applicable to Subrecipient's operations;
- indemnify, defend and hold harmless Vermont Afterschool and its directors, employees and staff against any liabilities, losses, claims, lawsuits, costs or expenses (including reasonable attorney's fees) arising out of or incurred in connection with Subrecipient's operation of its programs;
- use grant funds exclusively to carry out the purpose(s) of the program; and
- grant Vermont Afterschool, upon reasonable prior notice to Subrecipient, the right to audit the Subrecipient's books and records for purposes of confirming compliance with the requirements of the grant.

Note: Final contracts will also include DCF State Assurances.

Signature of Designated Official	Title	Date

Name

Application Instructions

Answers to all questions must be complete in order for the application to be accepted. To see how proposals will be scored, see the "Scoring Rubric" in Appendix A.

REMINDER: Answers to all questions should tell us how the grant purpose and priorities will be met:

- Aid communities with high quality afterschool, school vacation, and summer (year-round) child care programs that support working families and meet youth's well-being, connection, and mental health needs
- Maintain slots in afterschool, school vacation, and summer child care programs for children and youth (ages 5-12) in areas where few or no services currently exist and

in ways that increase how affordable, accessible, available, and inclusive these programs are across Vermont

- Increase the number of programs that accept the Child Care Financial Assistance Program (CCFAP) so that opportunities for Vermont children and youth expand

1. Background

- a. Describe the overall strengths your program has in your community and what you are deeply passionate about.
 - *How do you use your strengths to benefit the youth that this project will be serving?*
 - *How are solutions to challenges you face identified and solved?*
 - *How are community members, partners, parents, educators, and youth input included?*
- b. Describe your agency/organization and what makes you unique in your community:
 - *Who are you as an organization and where would you like to be in the future?*
 - *Diversity, equity, and inclusion statement or goals.*
 - *How does your staff reflect the race, gender culture, sexual orientation, language, and other qualities of the youth being served.*

2. Project Description and Sustainability

- a. Please describe the project and resources needed for its success. How will it sustain the number of school-age slots in your child care program?
- b. Describe your staffing plan and staff qualifications for those involved in implementing the proposed project:
 - *For the project leader.*
 - *For any other key personnel.*
 - *If you are adding staff, how will they be chosen for this project?*

3. Project Benefits/Successes

- a. Considering your strengths, opportunities, and aspirations in this project, what meaningful measures would indicate that you are on track to achieve your goal(s)?

- *Meaningful measures must relate to the purpose of this grant and how grant funds will be used.*
- *Include at least two indicators.*

Program Indicators of Success:
1.
2.
Additional Indicators of Success (Optional):

4. Planned Budget and Timeline

- a. Complete the budget table below. The category column is a drop-down menu with different cost categories (organized by object codes 100 - 900). Select only those that apply to your budget.

For each cost category:

- *Provide a detailed explanation of costs for how the grant funds will be spent.*
- *Provide an estimated month the cost will be expended.*
- *Be as specific as possible. For example:*
 - *List each staff position for this grant*
 - *# of hours on the project*
 - *Hourly rate*
 - *Subtotal for each position*

(Note: refer to the Temporarily Allowable Use of Funds for this grant regarding staff)
 - *List equipment charged to this grant and the cost per item*
 - *List supplies charged to this grant and cost per item*
- *Add categories and space as needed*

Category	Specific Details	Project Cost	Grant Funding Requested	Other Secured Funding	Timeline (Month)
Staff Salaries <i>(Object Code 100)</i>					
Staff Benefits <i>(Object Code 200)</i>					
Staff Training/ Professional Development <i>(Object Code 300)</i>					
Supplies/Materials					

(Object Code 600) In accordance with 2 CFR 200.314					
Equipment (Object Code 600) In accordance with 2 CFR 200.313					
Contracted Services (Object Code 300) Follow the Federal compliance for organization/school procurement policies, 2 CFR 200.320 , for each contract exceeding \$10,000					
Transportation (Object Code 500)					
Nutrition (Object Code 600)					
Other Expenses Please specify and add new lines as needed.					
Indirect (Object Code 900) To be determined with Vermont Afterschool					
TOTAL					

- b. In your own words, describe how grant funds will be spent including details on when and who will be involved.
- *Include details such as: permits or tests that must be completed for your project to be successful.*
 - *i.e. child care licensing, water quality tests, and other zoning-related requirements*
- c. Describe other sources of funding that will contribute to this project (if applicable).
- *i.e. participant fees, other grants, in-kind services, pursuing licensing, and utilizing the Child Care Financial Assistance Program (CCFAP) for families who qualify, or fund-raising efforts.*



APPENDIX A: SCORING RUBRIC

The grant proposal scoring rubric will be used to evaluate the grant applications submitted for consideration. Applications will be reviewed by a Grant Review Committee coordinated by Vermont Afterschool. The committee will use this rubric to guide its deliberations.

SCORING DEFINITIONS

- Highly Recommend – well defined and meaningful proposal
- Recommend with Clarifications – some clarifications needed
- Not Recommended – unclear purpose and uncertain outcomes

SCORING POINTS

Coversheet: 5/5 (*all applicants receive 5 points for a fully completed coversheet*)

Priority Points: 5 (coversheet)

Priority points are awarded to programs/organizations that serve youth in the following Vermont counties: Bennington, Essex, Grand Isle, Franklin, Orange, Orleans, or Windham County.

Background:

Highly Recommend 5 | Recommend with Clarifications 3 | Not Recommended 1

Project Description + Sustainability:

Highly Recommend 5 | Recommend with Clarifications 3 | Not Recommended 1

Program Benefits/Successes:

Highly Recommend 5 | Recommend with Clarifications 3 | Not Recommended 1

Planned Budget + Timeline:

Highly Recommend 5 | Recommend with Clarifications 3 | Not Recommended 1

Totals: (*not including 5 Priority Points*)

Highly Recommend 25 | Recommend with Clarifications 17 | Not Recommended 9

	Highly Recommend	Recommend With Clarifications	Not Recommended
1. Background	Fully envisioned their organization, their strengths, benefits, and who they are in their community.	Easily sense who they are as an organization, their strengths, and their benefits to the community.	Unclear and unsure of their strengths and who they are as an organization.
Reviewer Comments			
2. Project Description + Sustainability	Sophisticated. The plan directly responds to and will improve the most important areas of their goals.	Competent. The plan directly responds to and will improve an aspect of their goals.	Not yet competent/developing. The plan does not directly respond to and is unlikely to meet grant goals.
Reviewer Comments			
3. Project Benefits/Successes	Indicators of success are very clear and can be met with their strengths to achieve their goal(s).	Indicators of success are clear though may not fully use their strengths or meet the goal(s).	Indicators of success are vague, unclear, or do not match their goal(s) /use their strengths.
Reviewer Comments			
4. Planned Budget + Timeline	Budget is clearly defined with a sustainable plan and expenditures logically support and are necessary for the planned action(s).	Budget is defined and expenditures roughly support the planned action(s) but require more detail.	Budget is not fully defined , or expenditures do not logically support/are not necessary for the planned action(s).
Reviewer Comments			

RECOMMENDATION:

- I highly recommend awarding grant funding to this project.
- I recommend awarding grant funding to this project with further clarification.
- I am not recommending awarding grant funding to this project at this time.

GENERAL COMMENTS: Indicate support for scoring by including overall strengths and opportunities. These comments will be provided to applicants with their final scores.