



Vermont Afterschool, Inc.
150 Kennedy Drive
South Burlington, VT, 05403

2026-27 Room for Me Grant

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

Request for Proposals

Published: October 1, 2026
Application Deadline: October 31, 2026
Award Notification: December 1, 2026



2026-27 Room for Me Grant - Application

INTRODUCTION

Vermont Afterschool is proud to continue its partnership with the Vermont Department for Children and Families' Child Development Division (CDD) with the *Room for Me Grant*. This initiative supports expanded access to high quality child care and out of school time opportunities for school aged youth ages 5-12.

For the 2026-27 grant cycle, we are excited to announce \$400,000 in state funding available through Act 76 to support the expansion and sustainability of afterschool, school vacation, and summer programs across Vermont. Funding may be used for a range of needs, including facility maintenance and repairs, program and quality improvements, and other efforts that strengthen programs.

Since the Room for Me Grants were first awarded in January of 2023, Vermont has added more than **1,500 child care slots for school age children**. This growth represents a meaningful investment in Vermont's children, families, and communities. High quality out of school time programs give young people opportunities to learn, explore, build relationships, develop new skills, and find their voice.

The *Room for Me Grant* also prioritizes a shared commitment to equity, access, and quality. Every child deserves the opportunity to participate in safe, welcoming, and enriching environments beyond the school day. By investing in the places, people, and resources that make these programs possible, we ensure that more Vermont children are active, engaged, connected, and heard.

We encourage applicants to think boldly and creatively about the needs and opportunities in their communities. Whether increasing capacity, expanding program hours, strengthening program quality, or sustaining services that families depend on, this funding can help programs respond to local needs and create lasting impacts.

Thank you for your continued dedication to Vermont's children and families. We look forward to learning more about your work and partnering with communities across the state to strengthen and expand high quality out of school time opportunities. Please continue reading for detailed information about eligibility, allowable uses of funds, and application requirements.

A. GRANT PURPOSE:

This grant is designed to:

Maintain the number of child care slots, increase the number of child care slots, or improve program quality in alignment with STARS assessments or other quality improvement needs.

This can be accomplished through:

- Small maintenance, installation, and/ or repair projects

- Equipment or materials
- Increased levels of staffing (e.g. hiring, training, or extended staffing hours)
- Quality improvement purchases
- Improving STARS rating

See Allowable Uses of Funds below for additional details.

Funding may be used on one single project or multiple smaller projects.

Projects may be short or long term, but expenses will not be reimbursed if they occur after the grant period is over.

FUNDING AVAILABLE & GRANT AWARDS:

At least \$400,000 in funding supported by Act 76's Quality Capacity Special Fund is available for 2026-27 awards.

Grant awards start at \$5,000 and requests may be up to \$25,000 regardless of program size.

In order to ensure a more diverse cohort of grantees, we are limiting organizations to one application regardless of their number of physical sites or licensees.

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.

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 their number of child care slots, increasing their number of child care slots, or improving their program quality in alignment with STARS assessments or other quality improvement needs.

2026-27 GRANT APPLICATION AND PROJECT TIMELINE:

RFP Published: October 1, 2026

Questions Open: October 1, 2026 through October 30, 2026

[Please click here to submit questions about completing this application.](#)

Questions will be answered within 24 hours during regular business hours here: [2026-27 Room for Me Answers](#)

Applications Open: October 1, 2026 - October 31, 2026

Award Notifications: December 1, 2026

Award Period: January 1, 2027 - July 31, 2027

Final Expense Reporting Due: August 5, 2027

Narrative Reporting Due: April 5, 2027, July 5, 2027, and September 5, 2027

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 one financial reimbursement report on or before the fifth of each month for the duration of the grant period. Financial reports will be accompanied by supporting documentation (i.e., invoices and receipts). The final date for all Room for Me grantees to submit financial reports and supporting documentation is August 5, 2027.

Expenditures cannot be made after July 31, 2027, the final day of the award 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 CDD. Once financial reports and supporting documentation 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.

ALLOWABLE USES 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 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 of available slots or program opportunities
- Capital improvements and permanent renovations
 - Use this guidance on allowable construction as outlined in the Code of Federal Regulations: <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-45/subtitle-A/subchapter-A/part-98/subpart-F/section-98.56>
 - 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

UNALLOWABLE USES 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 1, 2027 - July

31, 2027)

- 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://bit.ly/RFMQuestions>

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

MONITORING & TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE:

Monitoring and technical assistance opportunities are essential. They can set your programs up for success and ensure that 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. The 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 quarterly narrative performance reports throughout the grant period. This report will include data on the following: total number of youth served; total number of program slots; data on other measurable outcomes; lessons learned, challenges; and successes. Additional data may be required. Narrative reports will be due on the following dates: **April 5, 2027, July 5, 2027, and October 5, 2027.**

B. Technical Assistance:

Grantees will be required to attend a virtual financial onboarding session with the grant coordinator after the award has been granted. This will be help 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 schedule by Vermont Afterschool throughout the grant period.

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

GRANT APPLICATION & SUBMISSION:

Complete and submit the electronic application here:

<https://bit.ly/RFMAApplication>

Submit questions about completing this application here:

<https://bit.ly/RFMQuestions>

REVIEW PROCESS & 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: Essex, Grand Isle, Lamoille, Orange, and Addison. Additional priority will also be given to programs that did not receive Room for Me funding during the last grant cycle. Please be sure to answer these questions on the cover page of the application to receive the additional points.

Eligibility Assurances

You must be able to check each of the eligibility assurance boxes in order to be eligible for consideration of a Room for Me Grant.

Recipients of grant funding shall:

☐ **Be a new or existing regulated, center-based child care, after school program, or family child care home in good regulatory standing.**

Select 'Yes' if this is in process or will be upon receipt of this grant award.

☐ **Provide the option to enroll children/ families eligible for and participating in the Child Development Division's Child Care Financial Assistance Program (CCFAP).**

Please [follow this link to read more about CCFAP](#) if you are not familiar with it

- ☐ Provide child care for school age children (ages 5 – 12) for at least 42 weeks of the year.
- ☐ Be in good regulatory standing with the Vermont Child Care Licensing regulations specific to the type of program being operated.
- ☐ Propose a type of project that is aimed at maintaining their number of child care slots, increasing their number of child care slots, or improving their program quality in alignment with STARS assessments or other quality improvement needs.

Signature of Designated Official

Name

Date

Title

Program Assurances

You must be able to check each of the program assurance boxes in order to be eligible for consideration of a Room for Me Grant.

Recipients of grant funding shall:

- ☐ Not discriminate in admission, employment, or administration of its 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 Vermont Child Development Division Assurances.

Signature of Designated Official

Name

Date

Title



2026-27 Room for Me Grant Application

Coversheet

Name of Organization

Primary Contact Name

First

Last

This is who we will contact with grant updates, questions, and information.

Contact Email

Contact Phone Number

Contact Role/ Position in Organization**Organization Mailing Address**

Address Line 1

Address Line 2

City

State

Zip Code

Is the physical program location the same as the mailing address above?☒ Yes ☐ No**Program County****State of Vermont Child Care Licensing Number***Enter 'N/A' if this is in process or will be upon receipt of this grant award.***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. To apply: <https://sam.gov/content/duns-uei>

Federal EIN**VT Tax ID Number****Website for Program or Organization***Write 'N/A' if you don't have one.***Grant Project**

Write a two sentence explanation of your grant project.

Funding Request

Room for Me Grant awards are between \$5,000 and \$25,000.

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

Program History

- ☐ This is a NEW Program
- ☐ This is the EXPANSION of an EXISTING Program

Nonprofit Status

- ☐ We are a nonprofit
- ☐ We are NOT a nonprofit

Select Your Organization Type

- ☐ Family Child Care (home-based) Provider
- ☐ Child Care Center, School, Business, Municipality, or Other Agency

Program Service Area: This program serves children and youth in Essex, Grand Isle, Lamoille, Orange, and/ or Addison Counties.

☐ Yes ☒ No

2 priority points will be awarded to programs serving youth in these high need counties.

Award History: This program received Room for Me funding during the last grant cycle.

☐ Yes ☒ No

2 priority points will be awarded to programs who did not receive these funds in the last year.

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 of the PDF.

REMINDER: Answers should describe how your proposed activities and use of grant funds will advance one or more of the following priorities:

1. **Strengthen high quality, year round child care:** Support high quality afterschool, school vacation, and summer programs that meet the needs of working families and promote youth well being, connection, and mental health.
2. **Expand access to child care opportunities:** Maintain or increase the number of available slots for children and youth ages 5-12, particularly in areas with limited or no existing services. Efforts should increase the affordability, accessibility, availability, and inclusivity of programs across Vermont.
3. **Expand participation in CCFAP:** Increase the number of programs that accept the Child Care Financial Assistance Program (CCFAP), expanding access to high quality child care opportunities for Vermont's children and youth.

Background

A. Please provide a brief overview of your organization, including its history, mission, and the work

you currently do.

What should we know about your organization to understand the role it plays in the lives of young people and their families?

B. What are the core values that guide your organization and your work with young people?

How do these values show up in your programs, relationships, and decision making?

C. What are your organization's greatest strengths?

What relationships, experiences, or approaches make your organization well positioned to do this work?

How do you use your strengths to benefit the youth that this project will be serving?

Program Capacity and Offerings

Note: This section is for data collection only. You will not be scored on your program capacity and offerings. All applicants will receive 5 points for completing this section.

A. Afterschool Programming

Capacity & Enrollment

What is the average number of school age youth enrolled in your afterschool program?

How many school age youth can you currently accommodate in your afterschool program?

If awarded this grant, how many school age youth would you be able to accommodate in your afterschool program?

Offerings & Schedule

How many weeks per school year are you currently offering your afterschool program?

If awarded this grant, how many weeks per school year would you be able to offer your afterschool program?

How many days per week are you currently offering your afterschool program?

If awarded this grant, how many days per week would you be able to offer your afterschool program?

B. Summer Programming

Capacity & Enrollment

What is the average number of school age youth enrolled in your summer program?

How many school age youth can you currently accommodate in your summer program?

If awarded this grant, how many school age youth would you be able to accommodate in your summer program?

Offerings & Schedule

How many weeks per summer are you currently offering your summer program?

If awarded this grant, how many weeks per summer would you be able to offer your summer program?

How many days per week are you currently offering your summer program?

If awarded this grant, how many days per week would you be able to offer your summer program?

Project Description and Sustainability

A. What elements of the grant purpose does your grant project satisfy?

☐ Maintaining Number of Program Slots

☐ Increasing Number of Program Slots

☐ Improving Program Quality

Select all that apply.

B. Please describe your grant project how it connects to the overall Room for Me Grant purpose.

C. Please describe the resources needed for your grant project to be successful.

Include staff, professional services, or other key personnel as resources. If you are adding staff, how will they be chosen for this project?

D. Please describe your efforts to enhance or develop community partnerships to support the program.

E. Please describe your plan to address sustainability beyond the end of the award period.

Activities and Engagement

Description:

In alignment with the Program Quality Assessment (PQA), program activities should be intentionally designed with a clear learning objective or skill building focus. High quality activities are engaging, well structured, and support participants connecting new concepts to their existing knowledge and experiences. Whenever possible, activities should also build towards a culminating project or event that reinforces and showcases the session's primary focus.

If you're applying as a brand new program, please answer the questions in accordance with your plans or anticipated offerings.

A. Describe an activity that illustrates what a typical high quality experience looks like in your program. What do youth do and what makes the activity engaging?

Responses should aim to satisfy the engaging activity description above.

B. How do you provide a variety of activities that engage youth with different interests, strengths, and learning styles?

C. How do your activities support positive youth development?

Describe the skills, relationships, interest, or other outcomes you intentionally seek to develop through program activities.

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 grant budget.

For each category you select, provide a detailed explanation of how grant funds will be spent. Be sure to reference the Allowable Use of Funds and be as specific as possible in your descriptions. For example:

Salaries: List each staff position of the grant project with their hourly pay rate and expected number of hours. Note: Salaries are only reimbursable for eight weeks.

- i.e. Program Director: \$25/ hour for 320 hours (8 weeks) | Staff Salaries (Object Code 100) | \$8,000.00

Contracted Work: List the contractor and their expected work for the grant project, along with the expected cost of labor and separate materials (below).

Materials and Supplies: List the supplies related to the grant project and the cost per item.

Add categories and space as needed by clicking "Add Item."

Budget

Specific Details	Category	Grant Funding Requested
		\$0.00

B. Describe how the requested funds will be used to support the proposed grant project.

C. Describe other sources of funding that will contribute to this project (if any).

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.

D. When do you anticipate beginning and completing your grant project?

You are not beholden to this estimate. We just want an idea of your timeline.



Appendix A: Scoring Rubric

This 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 (applicants receive 5 points for completing the section)

Priority Points: 2 (coversheet)

Priority points are awarded to programs/ organizations that serve youth in the following Vermont counties: Essex, Grand Isle, Lamoille, Orange, and/ or Addison.

Priority Points: 2 (coversheet)

Priority points are awarded to programs/ organizations that did NOT receive Room for Me funding during the last grant cycle.

Background:

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

Program Capacity and Offerings:

5/5 (applicants receive 5 points for completing the section)

Project Description and Sustainability:

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

Activities and Engagement:

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

Budget and Timeline:

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

Totals: *(not including priority points)*

	Highly Recommend	Recommend with Clarifications	Not Recommended
Background	Clearly describes organizational history, mission, values, current work, and strengths supporting positive youth development.	Provides relevant organizational information, but some details about mission, values, work, or strengths need clarification.	Provides limited organizational information and insufficient evidence of mission, values, strengths, or experience serving youth.
Reviewer Comments			
Project Description and Sustainability	Clearly presents an aligned project, needed resources, community partnerships, and a thoughtful plan for sustainability.	Describes a relevant project, but alignment, resources, partnerships, or sustainability plans need additional detail.	Project lacks clear alignment, necessary resources, meaningful partnerships, or a feasible sustainability plan.
Reviewer Comments			
Activities and Engagement	Provides engaging activities that accommodate diverse interests, strengths, learning styles, and positive youth development needs.	Describes engaging activities and youth development opportunities, but variety or responsiveness to youth needs needs clarification.	Provides limited evidence of engaging, varied, inclusive activities that support positive youth development.
Reviewer Comments			
Budget and Timeline	Provides a complete, reasonable budget, clear funding uses, additional funding sources, and realistic project timeline.	Budget and timeline are generally appropriate, but some expenses, funding sources, or timing need clarification.	Budget or timeline is incomplete, unclear, unrealistic, or insufficiently connected to the proposed project.
Reviewer Comments			

RECOMMENDATION:

_____ I highly recommend awarding grant funding to this project.

_____ I recommend awarding grant funding to this project with further clarification.

_____ I do not recommend 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.

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