First Children's Finance

MN Access to Technology – Security Camera Grants for Child Care Centers

Guidelines

(Includes Eligible and Ineligible Uses List, pages 3-5)

November 2026

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Minneapolis, MN 55401
612-473-6020

grants@firstchildrensfinance.org

Accommodation & Interpreter Services

If you need an accommodation or interpreter services during any open grant cycle, please contact the grants team at the Help Line at 612-473-6020 or email grants@firstchildrensfinance.org.

During open application periods, the help line is answered from 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. Monday – Friday and other times by appointment. Email is monitored daily. Following the open application period during application review, calls may be directed to voice mail, and messages are returned within 2 business days.

For providers who do not have online access, an application may be requested by calling 612-473-6020. Completed paper applications must be received at least 24 hours prior to the grant deadline to ensure adequate time to enter the application into the online grant portal. A free account for the online grant portal (www.Submittable.com) will be required for proper scoring. First and last name, an email address and secure password are all that is required for the account.

If the paper application is not received in time, applicants will be notified.

Grant Purpose

The State of Minnesota has dedicated a limited pool of funds to help licensed child care centers prepare for and comply with the new requirements outlined in Minnesota Statutes 142B.68, effective July 1, 2026.

The December round allows for both ***compliance and proactive purchasing and placement*** of cameras in Infant or Toddler spaces in accordance with grant guidelines provided below.

Statutory Changes Effective July 1, 2026

Before applying, centers should familiarize themselves with 142B.68 Video Security Cameras in Child Care Centers to ensure requests made through this application will meet all requirements effective July 1, 2026.

While the statute is not written out in these guidelines, an exemption is highlighted here:

Per 142B.68 Subd 3(c), *A licensed child care center is exempt from having cameras that meet the requirements under paragraph (b), clauses (3) and (4), if the center has cameras as required in paragraph (a) prior to July 1, 2026.* For this reason, requests from centers seeking to upgrade existing cameras solely to improve display resolution or frames per second will not be eligible. All other requests must meet the capabilities outlined in paragraph (b).

Eligible Entities

Per MN Statutes 142D.23 Subd. 3(5) and in accordance to support Minnesota Statutes 142B.68 changes, this opportunity is limited to child care centers located within the State of Minnesota who are actively serving children. This includes both:

- Licensed child care center – for profit
- Licensed child care center – nonprofit

Eligible Spaces

Requests through this grant are only allowed to support the following areas within the child care center:

- Infant classroom
- Infant sleep space if not within the classroom
- Toddler classroom
- Toddler sleep space if not within the classroom

Any request for items that would support efforts outside of these spaces is strictly prohibited.

Eligible Uses

- Closed circuit video security cameras for designated indoor infant and toddler rooms that meet the **following specifications:**
    - be turned on and recording at all times that the licensed child care center is in operation;
    - view at least 80% of the square footage of the corresponding room designated for infants or toddlers;
    - record and display the accurate date and time;

    - have a display resolution of 720p or higher; and
    - have a frames per second rate of 15 or higher

- Video storage that allows data to be saved for 28 days including:
    - Cloud storage subscription plans (up to 2 years if the year(s) may be paid in advance; up to 2 months if plan must be paid each month);
    - On-site NVR / DVR, NAS recording devices;
    - Back-up hard drive(s);
    - Data back-up subscriptions (up to 2 years if the year(s) may be paid in advance; up to 2 months if plan must be paid each month)
- Associated Hardware:
    - Network firewall or security appliance (to guard against hacking the video security camera data);
    - Ethernet cable;
    - Cable management;
    - Wi-fi router and extenders;
    - Surge Protector;
    - Tamper-resistant housing;
    - Mounting brackets;
    - Ceiling / wall mounts;
    - Monitor for viewing
- Anti-virus software to support network firewall
- Installation of equipment:
    - Camera system's in-house install team;
    - Electrician and / or contractor (new outlet(s) or conduit to ensure power is available where cameras need to be installed and/or camera installation / set up); or
    - IT Specialist for network set up of closed-circuit video security camera system
- Training on use of cameras and recording devices/storage:
    - training by camera system organization; or
    - IT /training video costs for how to operate new security system

All quotes/estimates and receipts must be itemized so any portion not eligible can be subtracted rather than disallowing the entire quote/estimate or receipt.

Requests must only relate to eligible MN Access to Technology – Security Camera grant uses, necessary for use with a closed-circuit video camera system. Most items are ineligible for the MN Access to Technology – Business Management grant.

Ineligible

- Upgraded equipment; replacement of working cameras or recording devices for newer models
- Video Security Cameras and equipment for recording outdoor space or any classrooms or sleep spaces not designated for infants and/or toddlers only
- Service repair plans or warranties
- Vendor membership fees
- Any item or service for which a previous commitment or payment has been made, including down payments or price locks
- Expenses related to installation labor provided by an individual related to or living with the child care provider or who is an employee of the child care center or parent organization. Quotes and receipts must be itemized so any portion not eligible can be subtracted rather than disallowing the entire quote or receipt.
- Other technology equipment, including but not limited to laptop/desktop computer and associated accessories (keyboard, mouse), tablet, smart phone
- Any eligible item requested for use other than with the closed-circuit video security camera(s) in rooms designated for infants or toddlers

Any expense found to be in conflict with these guidelines during final report reconciliation will be disallowed, and an invoice will be issued for return of the disallowed expense.

All equipment and expenses are limited to **indoor rooms designated for infants or toddlers**. If a center chooses to install video security cameras in other parts of the center (including multi-age group rooms where infants or toddlers may spend a portion of their day such as a sick room or indoor large motor space), Pre-K or School Age classrooms or outdoors, any quotes/estimates AND receipts must be clearly itemized for rooms designated for infants or toddlers with separate costs for each. Both materials and labor must be itemized to be included in grant expenses.

Grant Funding

The 2025 Minnesota legislature appropriated funds for this program, requiring that the funds be spent prior to 2029. In consultation with DCYF and taking into consideration new licensing requirements regarding security cameras that went into effect on July 1, 2026 for centers required to post a maltreatment investigation memorandum, half of the appropriated funds were made available in the first grant round. The remaining half will be made available in the second grant round, offered in December 2026. This round is open to all licensed child care centers to provide funding support to those centers that would like to add monitoring capability in their indoor rooms designated for infants or toddlers. Priority will be given to centers that are required to post a maltreatment investigation memorandum beginning July 1, 2026 or later.

Grant Size

Minimum grant size: $100 Maximum grant size: $4,000

Licensed child care centers may receive one Video Security Camera grant per site/license. This restriction will still apply if the license number changes for any reason for a program/site.

Timeline

The application cycle will remain open for one week and is open to all licensed child care centers. Grants will be awarded on a competitive basis. Grant awards will be announced in January 2027.

Grant Awards, Report and Payment

Within one week of grant award notification, acceptance of grant terms along with a W-9 and ACH (direct deposit) form must be returned to First Children's Finance. The grant award will then be paid up front. A **final report with paid-in-full receipts and photo documentation** of the completed project must be submitted to First Children's Finance within **60 days**. Any unspent funds or portion of expenses disallowed during

report reconciliation that do not match the grant award must be returned to First Children's Finance for re-allocation.

Considerations for Eligible Requests

1. All requests must relate to **designated indoor infant and/or toddler rooms** only.
2. Awardees will be given a deadline to sign and return a grant agreement. Providers may begin their projects/make their purchases on or after the date that this agreement is received by First Children's Finance.
3. Any item or service for which a previous commitment or payment has been made, including signed contracts/purchase orders, down payments or price locks - prior to return of the signed grant agreement - is not eligible. Grants may not be used to repay any type of debt service such as loans. Expenses for previously ordered, purchased or installed equipment is not eligible.
4. All labor requests must be provided by a professional installer, electrician or IT professional not related to or living with the child care center owner/director who works in the technology field. The installer may not be an employee of the child care center or parent organization. Estimates and receipts must include their name, business name, address, and phone number, shown on quotes prior to grant awards and on receipts for work performed.
5. If planning to relocate or close the child care center within 2 years, items or services purchased with grant funding that cannot be moved to the new location must be repaid on a prorated schedule.
6. Quotes should be itemized and prioritized so any portion not eligible can be subtracted from a potential grant award rather than disallowing the entire quote.
7. Any expense found to be in conflict with these guidelines during final report reconciliation will be disallowed.

Application Process

Applications may be submitted through the online portal at www.submittable.com using any computer, tablet or smart phone. The portal offers applications in English, Spanish and Somali.

For applicants new to technology, applications may be submitted by mail or email, but they must be received at least 24 hours prior to the grant application deadline to allow time for data entry into the grant portal prior to the deadline. Grant staff may also be available to scribe an application by phone by appointment, for those new to technology. An email address and Submittable account will be required.

Each application may cover one licensed setting only, and applicants may submit only one application per grant period for each license. If an edit or an addition is desired after submitting the application and the portal has not yet closed for the grant round, applicants should request that their application be opened for editing. Edits cannot be made to an application once the portal closes and additional materials will not be accepted via Messaging or email after the portal closes. Multiple applications submitted for the same license in a round will disqualify all submissions in that round. Center owners wishing to apply for more than one license must submit separate applications for each license. Each application will be evaluated separately.

The application must be signed by the owner of the child care business, even if the application is completed by another individual. Electronic signatures will be accepted.

More than one individual may collaborate on an application, but all communication will be sent through the portal to the email address used to sign into the Submittable grant portal.

Application Grant Portal: Submittable

To apply, complete an application by going to www.firstchildrensfinace.org/for-businesses/minnesota-grants and click on the **"Click Here to Apply"** button. This will lead into the Submittable grant portal.

A free Submittable account can be created **using an email address that is checked regularly**. Facebook or Google may be used to create a Submittable account, but applicants/grantees must regularly check the email address associated with their Facebook or Google accounts to receive messages regarding the grant. For this reason, **using Facebook or Google to create a Submittable account is not recommended**. ALL communication will be sent to the email address used to register for the Submittable account. Use a memorable password for ease of

returning to the platform. Messages may also be viewed in the MESSAGES tab in Submittable.

Submittable tips:

- You can save a draft of your work if you would like to finish filling out the form at a later time.
- Once you submit your application in Submittable, you will no longer be able to make changes. If you need to provide any additional information or make changes prior to a grant deadline, you may request your application be re-opened to edit the submission by calling 612-473-6020.
- Submittable works best on Google Chrome, Firefox, and Safari. Microsoft Edge is not supported. Please make sure you are using a supported Internet browser.
- First Children's Finance staff will follow-up with applicants by email through the Submittable grant portal. Please be sure to safelist notification emails from Submittable and check the email you used to sign up for your Submittable Account regularly. You may also view email in the Submittable Messages tab.

Additional instructions for using Submittable are available at Submittable.com.

Information Requested in the Application

1. Provider information (license, center owner/authorized agent and director name/address, license, capacity, CCAP, Early Learning Scholarship, number of designated infant or toddler rooms)
2. Demographics of Center Owner (or authorized agent), Director and actively enrolled children by age (required for aggregate reporting)
3. Narrative Questions (monitoring ability, safety/supervision challenges, current camera equipment, reason for request and how a grant will improve safety, financial need)
4. Photo documentation of designated Infant or Toddler rooms
5. Grant Request and Budget Information:
    a. Total grant request amount
    b. Amount by category

   i. Installation or Subscription Service quote – must include vendor name, address/contact information, itemized service description by space and pricing; and/or
   ii. Screen shot or detailed list of equipment requested – must include store/vendor name, contact information (address/phone or web address), product name, item/model number, description of equipment, exact price and sales tax rate if not shown but requested as part of the grant award.
6. Attestation (same information as found in the Grant Agreement and Attestation to be signed and returned to FCF following an award letter)

Award Process

Complete award review will begin after each application round closes. Depending upon the number of applications received, it is anticipated that award decisions will be made in January 2027.

All grant process stages, including notification of award, are subject to change and can vary with each grant cycle. Applicants are advised to monitor their email for status updates.

Grant Notification: Award notification will be made by email to the email address used to register for a Submittable account. The award letter will specify terms of the grant, including which specific items from the proposed budget are approved. Grant funds may only be used for items or services as outlined in the grant award letter.

Partial Awards: Partial grant awards may be made based on eligibility of items requested in the proposal budget or availability of funds. If a partial award is made, grant funding must be spent only on item(s) approved as identified in the grant award letter. If your project comes in under budget and additional items were referenced in the application, grantees may submit a modification request with budget documentation prior to realizing that expense. If no additional items were referenced in the application or if the modification request is not approved, unspent funds must be returned to First Children's Finance. If requesting more than one item or service, it is highly recommended to note priority order in the application.

Award Agreement: An acceptance of the grant terms will be required, including required attestations, an ACH direct deposit form and an IRS W9 form. If grantee

does not have a bank account for direct deposit, a check will be mailed. Checks may take up to three weeks longer for processing, and ACH direct deposit is considered more secure.

The signed grant agreement and attestations must be returned within 7 days of award notification. Grant projects may begin after receipt of the grant agreement.

Post Award – Final Report*: The final report is due within 60 days of the grant agreement deadline. During final report reconciliation, if any use is found to be inconsistent with eligible uses, that portion of the grant funding may be disallowed. Once reconciled, grantee will be notified either that terms have been met and the license will be monitored for two years, or that an invoice will be issued for return of funds. Please note that receipts are verified and photo documentation is required.

*More information about the final report is found in another section, below.

Denied Applications: Applicants will be notified if their application is denied. Examples for why an application may not be approved for funding include but are not limited to:

- Application does not meet the grant guidelines for funding or is incomplete;
- Applicant scored lower than other applications submitted and/or
- Limited fund available within the grant program.

Award Rubric

Grants will be evaluated using an award rubric with a numeric rating for the following categories:

- Access Equity Area score
- Whether or not high need children/families are served
- Licensed capacity and active enrollment
- Whether or not an applicant serves CCAP and/or Early Learning Scholarship families
- Number of sites owned/operated by applicant
- Current video security camera usage
- Available financial resources
- Maltreatment Investigation Memorandum posting status
- Overall reason for request

- If further determination is required, economic development region may be used to balance grant allocations by geography and demographics of the community served.

Every effort will be made to balance grant allocations by geography and demographics of the community served.

Grant Agreement and Attestation

To accept a grant, child care business owners must sign an attestation that indicates understanding and agreement of the following:

1. Applicant is **currently licensed as a child care center** with the Minnesota Department of Human Services.
2. Center owner has read and understands the requirements, including the reporting requirements and deadlines.
3. **Purchase/installation will be made exactly as described in the award letter** or as amended with permission in writing from Grant Administrators. Grant Administrators reserve the right to disallow items not matching the approved budget.
4. Center will not use funds to supplant expenditures for which there is another federal, state, tribal and/or local public funding source.
5. Center will submit a final report within 60 days, answering all questions in the report and submit:
    i. Receipt/expense/training documentation for entire grant; and
    ii. Photo of equipment purchased – must be out of the box, set-up, and turned on for use
    iii. Documentation of training completion if training fees are awarded
6. Center will provide licensed child care in Minnesota caring for children other than the center's own ranging in age from birth – toddlers for a minimum of two years from the date of the grant fund notification. (Licensed care may also be provided for Pre-K and school-age, but enrollment of infants or toddlers is required.) If the program closes before the minimum period is complete, the grantee understands that they will be required to return a prorated amount of this grant. The prorated portion is calculated from the date that the signed grant agreement is received.
7. Return a prorated share of grant dollars spent on items not moving with a

program that relocates within the two-year period, even if continual care is provided for children other than the provider's own.

8. If Center is sold within two years, original grantee agrees to notify First Children's Finance of the sale. The original grantee also agrees to notify the new owner of the grant terms and facilitate a new grant agreement with the new owner and First Children's Finance. If the new owner does not accept or meet the grant terms, original grantee understands that they may be invoiced for a prorated portion for return of grant funds.
9. Remain actively licensed in good standing (including with conditional licenses), verifiable by grant administrators following grant implementation. Conditional licenses are allowed.
10. Make services available to families regardless of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, disability, public assistance, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, or familial status.

Grantees also attest that they understand that by signing the agreement:

- First Children's Finance is authorized to share information with the Minnesota Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) to analyze data on use and effectiveness of grant funds. All data shared in the application and final report may be shared and/or aggregated for reporting purposes.
- If they knowingly submit false or fraudulent information during any part of the grant process, their program will no longer be eligible for funds. Any funds awarded during this grant process would be required to be repaid and appropriate authorities would be notified.
- If unable to meet grant requirements, they must agree to return up to the full amount of the grant to First Children's Finance for reallocation. Failure to do so will result in requirement to return funds and/or reporting to licensing authorities and DCYF fraud department.

Additional Forms

W9: Grant dollars are considered taxable income. First Children's Finance will issue a 1099 for any payments over $600 to businesses as required by the IRS. (S-Corps, C-Corps, churches and nonprofit centers are exempt from 1099s. FCF is still required to collect a W9, but a 1099 may not be issued.) Grantees should work with their tax

advisors on how to calculate eligible business expense deductions when reporting the grant to the IRS for tax purposes.

Please Note: The Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN) MUST match the TIN used to file taxes. If taxes are filed using a social security number, the W9 must include the social security number. If taxes are filed using an Employer Identification Number (EIN), Line 1 on the W9 must indicate the name associated with the EIN that is used to file taxes.

ACH: Grantees will be asked to complete an electronic, direct deposit bank transfer (ACH) form, including bank routing and account information for direct deposit. If a provider does not have a bank account, a check may be requested, though this will cause a delay in payment.

Final Report

A final report will be due within 60 days of the deadline for returning signed grant agreements.

Failure to submit the final report will result in an invoice for return of all funds received to First Children's Finance.

CAUTION

If grantees do not follow the terms outlined in the grant agreement including return of the final report and/or payment of an invoice issued, a referral will be made to the Minnesota Department of Children, Youth and Families for investigation by the Office of Inspector General. This may result in recoupment of payments already made, discontinuation of future payments from state-funded programs, and/or additional action related to the funds and the provider license under Minnesota Statutes, chapters 119B, 245A, 245E, and Minnesota Statutes, section 245.095.

This means grantee may be ineligible for other Minnesota Department of Children, Youth and Families public programs per Minnesota Statutes, section 245.095 LIMITS ON RECEIVING PUBLIC FUNDS.

These programs include Licensing (license may be suspended or revoked), Parent Aware Ratings (rating may be revoked and grantee may be excluded from seeking a future rating); and funds, including but not limited to Great Start Compensation

payments, Parent Aware grants, TEACH scholarships, REETAIN bonuses, Child Care Aware Regional Grants, reimbursement through the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP), Early Learning Scholarships and any additional funding from First Children's Finance – both grants and loans. Referral to another agency may be made by the Minnesota Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) if necessary, such as to the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension or Minnesota Department of Revenue.

Confidentiality, Data Privacy and Public Information

Applications will not be discussed outside of First Children's Finance employees or Board of Directors. Aggregated applicant and award information will be compiled for reporting to the Minnesota Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF).

As this grant program is funded through the Minnesota Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF), First Children's Finance is required to comply with the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act, Minnesota Statutes Chapter 13.599. Information provided and other information related to the awarding of grants may be classified as public data pursuant to the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act. First Children's Finance is authorized to share all such information with the Minnesota Departments of Human Services/Children, Youth and Families and such other government agencies as may have a right to access such information for public purposes, including analyzing the use and effectiveness of grant funds. All information may be shared in full and/or aggregated format for reporting purposes.

If provider does not comply with terms of the grant agreement, individual provider information will be reported to the Minnesota Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF), licensing authority and/or other investigative body, including law enforcement as required.

Grant Application/Report Assistance

For grant assistance (applications and reports) and for questions not covered in these guidelines, email grants@firstchildrensfinance.org or call the help line at 612-473-6020. Translation, interpreter services and assistance with grant application are available upon request.

If voice mail is received, please leave a message so the call may be returned.

During open grant application periods, the help line will be answered Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. Other times, including evening hours, may be available by appointment.