

## 2026 UWHMC CHILDCARE WORKFORCE STABILIZATION GRANT NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY (NOFO)

### BACKGROUND

Beginning in 2023, Harvey County businesses, community organizations, and the Harvey County Childcare Task Force came together following the closure of the community's largest daycare facility to address childcare access and quality in our community. Through the Harvey County Early Childhood Initiative, in partnership with United Way of Harvey and Marion Counties, we are working to create deep, meaningful change that supports early childhood development and sustains quality care for years to come.

A key challenge identified by local providers is the difficulty of finding and retaining qualified staff, due in large part to wages that do not reflect a living wage. Raising tuition to increase wages pushes care out of reach for many working families. To help bridge this gap, UWHMC and the Harvey County Childcare Task Force established the Early Childhood Initiative Fund to support wage increases across existing childcare centers in Harvey County.

### PURPOSE

United Way of Harvey and Marion Counties is soliciting proposals from licensed childcare centers in Harvey County, Kansas to receive funding that will be used exclusively for wage supplements to stabilize and strengthen the childcare workforce. Funds may be used for:

- Ongoing wage differentials (e.g., hourly or salary supplements)
- Stipends or retention bonuses
- Recruitment bonuses for new staff
- Incentives for non-traditional working hours
- Other direct compensation strategies that raise total pay toward a living wage

Awards under this NOFO will be made to eligible organizations on a competitive basis.

### GRANT PERIOD

The Childcare Workforce Stabilization grants will be announced on or around Wednesday, June 10, 2026. The grant period is July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2027.

### WHO MAY APPLY

To be eligible, applicants must:

1. Be a **licensed childcare center** (including preschools and center-based programs) located in **Harvey County, Kansas**.
2. Serve children ages **0-5** (centers that also serve school-age children are eligible if funding focuses on early childhood staff).
3. Be in good standing with state licensing authorities, with no unresolved major violations.

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4. Employ paid caregiving staff (full-time and/or part-time) who will directly benefit from wage supplements funded through this grant.
5. Be willing to:
  - Track and report wage changes for staff supported by the grant
  - Participate in brief surveys and/or interviews regarding staff recruitment, retention, and morale
  - Acknowledge United Way of Harvey and Marion Counties / Harvey County Childcare Task Force as a funder in communications and materials, where appropriate

### FUNDING INFORMATION

- **Total funds available:** \$55,000
- **Grant size:** Anticipated awards of **\$5,000–\$15,000 per center**, depending on:
  - Number of staff impacted
  - Proposed wage strategy
  - Overall need and strength of proposal

UWHMC reserves the right to make larger or smaller awards, or to fund only a portion of a proposal, based on the number and quality of applications received.

### ALLOWABLE & NON-ALLOWABLE USE OF FUNDS

#### Allowable Uses (must directly support staff compensation):

- Wage differentials or hourly supplements
- Retention bonuses for current staff
- Recruitment or sign-on bonuses for new hires
- Longevity or tiered bonus structures (e.g., bonuses at 6 or 12 months of employment)
- Incentives for extended or non-traditional hours
- Benefits stipends (e.g., a monthly stipend to offset health, dental, or childcare costs), as part of total compensation

#### Non-Allowable Uses:

- Capital improvements (e.g., building repairs, playground equipment)
- General operating expenses not tied to staff compensation (utilities, rent, etc.)
- Curriculum or classroom supplies
- Debt service or reimbursement for past expenses
- Wage supplements for staff not directly involved in childcare/education (e.g., solely administrative or fundraising staff), unless clearly justified as essential to classroom function

### ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS

Grant recipients will be required to:

- Collect and report data to UWHMC as it relates to the program

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- Submit bi-annual reports with progress data
  - December 30, 2026
  - July 15, 2027
- Include UWHMC logo on all program materials and publicity for the duration of the grant period

**Contingent participation in assessment and quality supports:** Contingent upon the Harvey County Childcare Task Force receiving funding through the Early Childhood Block Grant administered by the Kansas Children’s Cabinet and Trust Fund, all childcare centers receiving funding through the Childcare Workforce Stabilization Grants agree to:

- Allow the Harvey County Childcare Task Force, or its designee, to administer Ages & Stages Questionnaires (ASQ) and Individual Growth and Development Indicators (IGDI) assessments for enrolled children, in coordination with center leadership; and
- Participate in CLASS® (Classroom Assessment Scoring System) observations and related coaching/supervision provided by a qualified provider contracted by the Harvey County Childcare Task Force.

These services will be provided at no cost to the center and are intended to support staff development, continuous quality improvement, and aligned outcomes reporting.

## APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

- Applications are due close of business (5:00 p.m.) on May 15, 2026.
- Completed applications include:
  - Application
  - Budget form
- All applications must be submitted to [director@uwahmc.org](mailto:director@uwahmc.org) with the Subject Header: [Insert Organization Name] Childcare Workforce Stabilization Application
  - Please save the completed application in PDF format with the title: [Insert Organization Name] Childcare Workforce Stabilization Application
  - Hard copy applications and attachments are NOT necessary.
  - Handwritten applications will not be considered.
- Awards will be announced on or around Wednesday, June 10, 2026.
- Please visit UWHMC website ([uwahmc.org](http://uwahmc.org)) to find the grant application and budget worksheet.

## REVIEW & SELECTION

Proposals will be reviewed by a committee convened by United Way of Harvey and Marion Counties and the Harvey County Childcare Task Force. Reviewers will consider:

- Alignment with the purpose of stabilizing the childcare workforce
- Clarity and feasibility of the wage strategy
- Number and type of staff impacted

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- Potential impact on childcare access and quality
- Realistic approach to tracking outcomes and learning from the project
- Geographic and programmatic diversity across funded centers (as possible)

UWHMC reserves the right to request additional information, to partially fund proposals, or to decline any application.

## ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

1. Allow facility to be listed in our guide used by our Resource Navigator to make referrals as a potential childcare option for families.
2. Operate the program receiving funding (if program ceases to exist, funding will also cease).
3. Exemplify UWHMC’s mission.
4. Represent United Way of Harvey and Marion Counties positively in all communications.
5. Acknowledge United Way of Harvey and Marion Counties and the Harvey County Childcare Task Force at least twice on social media outlets during the course of the grant period.

## APPLICATION TIMELINE

UWHMC Childcare Workforce Stabilization NOFO Released	April 1, 2026
Applications due	May 15, 2026
Official award notifications sent on or around	June 10, 2026
Grant period begins on	July 1, 2026
Mid-Year Report due	December 30, 2026
Final Report due	July 15, 2027

### For More Information, Contact:

Dalton Black, Executive Director | 316-283-7101 – or – [director@uwahmc.org](mailto:director@uwahmc.org)

