

Tiny Steps Child Care Grant Guidelines

The Duluth 1200 Fund is a 501© (3) non-profit focused on economic development and small business sustainability within the city of Duluth, MN. \$200,000 has been dedicated to the Tiny Steps Child Care Grant for childcare businesses within the city limits of Duluth experiencing a challenge that may jeopardize the programs' ability to maintain child care services and owner-operators in financial need to start up their own child care business or expand their existing child care.

Who can apply for the Tiny Steps Child Care Grant?

- Licensed family-based, Special Family Child Care or Center-based programs and child care providers that need funding to continue operations or start up a new child care business.
- The Business must be in the city limits of Duluth
 - Link to find your Duluth Neighborhood - <https://duluthmn.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=0ac4b0248b7e4bb0b31dbc41426abcfe>

How much money can my program apply for?

- \$10,000-Licensed Center-based programs.
- \$5,000-Licensed Family-based and Special Family Child Care programs.

What items can my program apply for?

- Programs may apply for but are not limited to; funds to replace or repair materials damaged or lost due to an emergency or to correct infractions flagged by licensing.
- Licence requirements costs for providers, start up costs for new Family or Special Family licensed programs and equipment purchases.
- All materials must be new and must be purchased from a retail store, not a private party.
- Licensed center-based programs may apply for funding to support capital improvements such as HVAC, plumbing or roof repair, etc.

THE MISSION OF THE DULUTH 1200 FUND IS TO FOSTER THE LONG-TERM VITALITY AND DIVERSITY OF DULUTH'S ECONOMY BY PROVIDING SUSTAINABLE AND RESPONSIVE GAP FINANCING AND FUNDING OPTIONS THAT EMPOWER LOCAL BUSINESSES TO STARTS, GROW, AND THRIVE.

- Grants can be used to cover the costs of materials for outdoor play area fencing or other minor construction projects as required by licensing to ensure child safety or meet other program standards.
- Below is a list of possible uses for funds that may be required by licensing.
 - a. Window replacement or egress window installation
 - b. Repairing steps, installing railing, deck maintenance, if flagged by licensing
 - c. Replacement of wooden barriers that contain creosote or arsenic, and/or guardrails on stairs
 - d. Emergency equipment failure required by licensing and/or fire marshal such as: a refrigerator not keeping temperature (below 40 degrees F); furnace failure (required to keep indoor temperature of 68 degrees F); water heater breaking (required to have warm running water for hand washing); dishwasher breaking (required to clean & sanitize dishes), stove breaking; and/or washer/dryer breaking (required to keep bedding clean). Only 50% of these costs are eligible expenses towards the grant request if they are shared with home owner for private use.
 - e. Household alarms and detectors, smoke alarms, carbon monoxide alarms, radon detectors, lead content detectors (for toys and other child items which could be put in the mouth), fire extinguisher inspection.
 - f. Water testing
 - g. Crib/pack and play purchase.
 - h. Fire doors when having an attached garage.

What items are not eligible?

- Major construction or renovations that are not required for licensure compliance or for building preservation
- Office supplies not directly used for early childhood quality improvement activities
- Field Trip costs
- Child Care Tuition (scholarships)
- Items prohibited by licensing
- Soft costs including funds to address legal fees, advertisement, banking services, cleaning, mortgage or rent, taxes, etc.
- Refinancing of existing debt.

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If my program received a grant, how will my program receive the money?

- If awarded, you will receive an email requesting you to electronically sign a grant agreement, complete an ACH Authorization form and W-9. To move forward and accept the grant funding, you must sign and return the grant agreement and provide the required documentation.
- Grants will be paid up front. You must maintain receipts of all expenses for which grant funding was used and provide proof of payment with your final report due six (6) months after the date of funding disbursement.

When is the grant available?

- This one-time grant funding opportunity will be available June 30th until the application period closes on August 25th, 2025.

How do I submit my grant request?

1. Submit a grant application with attachments via the Duluth 1200 Fund website at <https://1200fund.com/>. The application button will be found under loan programs, within the Tiny Steps Childcare Grant information dropdown box.
2. Paper applications can be mailed to: City of Duluth, 411 West. 1st Street, Duluth MN 55802; Attn: 1200 Fund

Will I be notified of the status of my grant?

- Applicants will be notified by email in early September if their application was accepted or denied.

THIS PROGRAM WAS APPROVED BY THE DULUTH 1200 BOARD
ON 23RD DAY OF JUNE 2025



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