

**Business Owners in Childcare Association Rhode Island
Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training
Real Jobs Grant Q&A**

What is the purpose of the grant?

Due to staff shortages related to high turnover, burnout from the pandemic, and low wages, Business Owners in Childcare Association of Rhode Island (BOCA) is partnering with Skills for Rhode Island's Future (SkillsRI) and the Community College of Rhode Island (CCRI) to implement a job training program to develop and retain childcare professionals.

How many employees will be onboarded through this grant program?

This program aims to enhance the skills of up to 50 new and existing child care employees.

Interested BOCA agencies can be considered for support of up to 2 new staff members or 1 new staff member and 1 current staff member.

The grant program is limited to supporting no more than 10 current staff members collectively.

Additionally, to enhance staff retention, employee wages will be supplemented, bringing the total hourly rate to \$18.00 per hour pending an organization's registration and approval in Ocean State Procures (OSP) system and successfully applying for the Governor's Workforce Board's Work Immersion Program.

Many of my staff work at an hourly rate of less than \$18.00 per hour. Am I required to maintain this hourly rate for the participants selected to work at my facility?

Insufficient compensation, stemming from inadequate reimbursement rates, has consistently emerged as the primary factor contributing to the workforce challenges in the sector, which influenced the \$18 per hour rate for this grant program.

All trainees will be required to complete prescribed coursework and engage in 480 hours of on-the-job training. This on-the-job training will be provided by the participating member agency.

Through an organization's registration and approval in the Ocean State Procures (OSP) system and successfully applying for the Governor's Workforce Board's Work Immersion Program, each employer will receive reimbursement of \$3,600 per new employee for the first 400 hours of work. Following this, partnering employer agencies are strongly encouraged to commit to paying an hourly rate of \$18/hour for the duration of the program, but it is not a requirement.

Are there initial eligibility requirements for individuals interested in participating?

Must be 18 years old, a Rhode Island resident and U.S. citizen

Have a high school diploma or GED)

Ability to speak, write, and read English language with proficiency.

Currently unemployed or underemployed

Interested in pursuing a career in child care.

Is this program only eligible for full-time staff?

No. This grant program will support both full-time and part-time staff. The hours of the staff member can align to the work at the partner location.

Are there any requirements for interested organizations?

An interested organization must be a member of BOCA.

BOCA is a nonprofit professional association of business owners and operators of child care and early childhood education programs. Members work together to ensure that private child care organizations can provide the best possible care for families and children in Rhode Island.

The annual membership fee is \$200. Membership is valid for one year for each child care program. Multiple representatives from each location may attend meetings and workshops, up to 4 members per site.

Organizations participating in this job training program and signed up for a BOCA membership will be reimbursed for the \$200 membership fee.

To become a member, please visit <https://bocari.org/membership/>

To receive reimbursement of wages, participating organizations must register and be approved in the Ocean State Procures system and successfully apply for the Governor’s Workforce Board’s Work Immersion Program.

How will my organization receive reimbursement for the BOCA annual membership?

BOCA will send the \$200 reimbursement check after a member agency has joined BOCA and after a candidate has been selected to work at their organization through this grant program.

What are the eligibility requirements for the Work Immersion Program? How do I apply for the Work Immersion Program? What is the reimbursement rate for the Work Immersion Program?

Please refer to the Work Immersion Program Guide:

<https://gwb.ri.gov/sites/g/files/xkqbur746/files/2023-04/Work%20Immersion%20Program%20Guide%20%28April%202023%29.pdf>

How will my organization receive reimbursement for wages?

If the BOCA member agency is approved in the OSP system and successfully enrolled in the Work Immersion Program, the BOCA member agency will be responsible for submitting for reimbursement. An organization can begin to apply for reimbursement upon completion of the contract or hours are met.

For additional information, please refer to the program guide:

<https://gwb.ri.gov/sites/g/files/xkqbur746/files/2023-04/Work%20Immersion%20Program%20Guide%20%28April%202023%29.pdf>.

What role will Skills for Rhode Island’s Future play in this grant program?

SkillsRI will be responsible for thoroughly screening participants for the proposed training program. Skills will be responsible for the screening process of new staff.

- Candidates will undergo a pre-screening process, either conducted at the SkillsRI office or virtually, to determine their eligibility.
- As part of the application and interview process, candidates being considered for the program will be asked to prioritize the top three BOCA member child care centers where they would like to be placed.
- SkillsRI recruiters will share pertinent information about each candidate with the Grant Program Manager. The Grant Program Manager will relay candidate information to the BOCA member agencies to determine who will be interviewed for a potential placement. **BOCA member agencies will have up to (5) five business days to complete the interview process and communicate if the candidate(s) is a match to the Grant Program Manager.**
- Upon hiring and matching a candidate(s) to the BOCA member agency, the Grant Program Manager will alert SkillsRI to conduct necessary background checks and any additional required assessments.
- After background checks and additional assessments are completed, SkillsRI will provide candidate(s) with information on how to register in the Governor’s Workforce Board Portal.
- The Grant Program Manager will then notify the BOCA member agency that the candidate(s) can move forward with the program. The Grant Program Member will also notify the candidate of acceptance into the program via an email outlining next steps regarding starting work at the BOCA member agency and CCRI class registration.
- CCRI will connect with each candidate to formally register for the training program. CCRI to invite RI Reconnect to present to candidates during orientation to share more about wraparound services.

If my organization has an existing staff member to participate in the grant program, will that staff member have to follow the same screening process?

No. However, we will need to register them for the program, which includes the following steps:

1. The Grant Program Manager to share instructions, code, and link for current staff members to register in the Governor's Workforce Board Portal.
2. Grant Program Manager to notify the candidate of acceptance into the program and outline next steps regarding starting work at the BOCA member agency and CCRI class registration.
3. CCRI will connect with each candidate to formally register for the training program. CCRI to invite RI Reconnect to present to candidates during orientation about wraparound services.

Is there an opportunity to provide a job description for SkillsRI to post?

Yes. The Grant Program Manager will ask each participating BOCA Member agency to share a sample job description(s) for the role(s) they would like filled. SkillsRI will then create more consolidated job postings that meet the needs of all BOCA member agencies participating in each cohort.

How is the Community College of Rhode Island involved?

BOCA has partnered with the CCRI to develop and lead the child care training programs. There will be two different tracks provided, based on the interests of applicants: Child Development Associate (CDA) program and School-aged Certificate.

What is CCRI's Child Development Associate Training Program?

The 14-week Child Development Associate (CDA) class, taught through CCRI, is specifically designed for working students seeking to enhance their knowledge and skills in early childhood development and childcare.

This nationally recognized credential assesses the expertise and abilities of early childhood educators through multiple methods, including exams, observations, and the creation of a professional portfolio.

The primary objective of this credential is to ensure that early childhood educators provide high-quality care and effectively support the developmental, emotional, and educational needs of children.

The program will encompass the following key components:

- Overview of the six (6) CDA Competency Standards
- Guidance preparing the Professional Portfolio
- Receive developing a Philosophy Statement
- Networking and community support
- 42 hours of RI State Approved Professional Development Hours
- Assistance completing the CDA online application process and pre-exam requirements.

Additionally, candidates must commit to working in the child care field for a minimum of one year to be eligible for the Child Development Associate (CDA).

Throughout the duration of the training program, participants will have access to CCRI's support services, including mentoring, coaching, and tutoring.

In addition to completing classroom coursework, students must fulfill 480 hours of practical work experience in a licensed early learning facility and 120 hours of professional development before having their portfolio reviewed and taking an exam. The CDA class counts as 42 professional development hours, the Center for Early Learning Professionals offers many free classes for the remainder and CCRI will provide guidance on what to take. The 480 hours must be in the subject area of the CDA (i.e., pre-school or infant and toddlers).

What is CCRI's School-aged Certificate Program?

This School-aged Certificate Program will address the unique needs and challenges of working with school-aged children, ensuring that professionals in this field receive the necessary training and skills to effectively support and guide them.

Similar to the training for early childhood professionals, the school-aged certificate program will encompass vital topics specifically relevant to this age group.

These topics, identified during the planning grant phase of the program, will include essential areas such as youth development principles and strategies for addressing behavioral health concerns. Additionally, participants will receive first aid and CPR certification, ensuring they are equipped with necessary emergency response skills.

To complement the classroom coursework taken at CCRI, participants will be required to complete 480 hours of hands-on experience providing direct service in a licensed Out of School Time (OST) program.

Is it expected for my organization to pay the participants while they attend classes?

No. The wages are for time worked at your organization since participant tuition is covered under this grant.

When will classes be held? Are there virtual class options?

Classes will be held virtually in the evenings with 1-2 classes per week. Applicants will be asked to visit a CCRI campus to set up class registration. The in-person session before class starts will make it easier for students to pick up program materials and learn virtual classroom technology.

What if participants do not have access to a computer or have transportation challenges getting to work?

To ensure seamless access to wraparound services, community resources will be shared with accepted applications. These services encompass basic needs assistance such as food and clothing, educational programs, case management, and help in accessing government programs like SNAP.

During a candidate's orientation at CCRI, there will be a presentation by Reconnect RI to share more about resources students can be considered for such as support for laptops, groceries, and transportation.

What is the grant program timeline?

The grant program is divided into three cohorts.

Cohort 1: Preschool Aged Children

Rolling Enrollment:	January 01, 2024- March 01,2024
Tentative Program Start Date	Mid-March

Cohort 2: School Aged Children

Rolling Enrollment:	April 01, 2024- June 01, 2024
Tentative Program Start Date:	Mid-June

Cohort 3: Infants & Toddlers

Rolling Enrollment:	Jul 01, 2024- September 01, 2024
Tentative Program Start Date:	Mid-September

Will the individuals enrolled in the program be expected to engage in the 480 hours of one-the-job training while attending classes to receive their certification?

Yes. Work will begin at the organization around the same time as classes begin. Candidates will most likely work part-time as classes will be in the evenings, up to two days per week.

What happens if a participant quits, breaks policy resulting in termination, etc.? Do we get a new person?

If a person quits within the first week of classes, we will try to find a new candidate.

Who is the grant program manager?

The grant program manager is Maria Fruci, director of the Rhode Island Alliance of Boys & Girls Clubs. She can be contacted via email at mfruci@epbgc.org.

Is my organization responsible for any reporting requirements?

No. However, upon the conclusion of the training program, we will gather valuable feedback from all participants, both employers and childcare workers, to assess their training and on-the-job training experience.

We will utilize surveys to capture insights and suggestions. This feedback will play a crucial role in shaping the future design and implementation of the program as we strive to continuously improve and advance this vital work.

How do I participate? Who should I contact with additional questions?

Reach out to the grant program manager, Maria Fruci, director of the Rhode Island Alliance of Boys & Girls Clubs. She can be contacted via email at mfruci@epbgc.org.