



MOUNTAINHEART  
COMMUNITY SERVICES NORTH

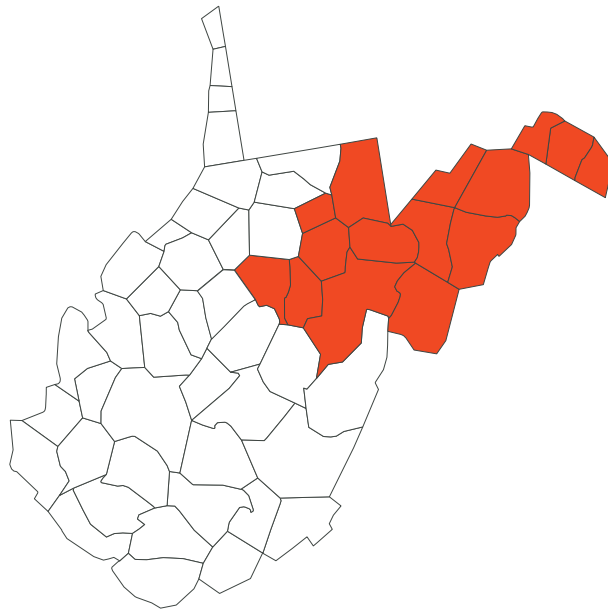
STARTUP GUIDE FOR

# FAMILY CHILD CARE FACILITIES



**WEST VIRGINIA COUNTIES IN THE MOUNTAINHEART COMMUNITY SERVICES NORTH CHILD CARE RESOURCE AND REFERRAL REGION:**

- BARBOUR
- BERKELEY
- GRANT
- HAMPSHIRE
- HARDY
- JEFFERSON
- LEWIS
- MINERAL
- MORGAN
- PENDLETON
- PRESTON
- RANDOLPH
- TAYLOR
- TUCKER
- UPSHUR



PRODUCED BY:



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# BEFORE YOU BEGIN

We have developed a comprehensive guide to opening a family child care facility in West Virginia with a brief overview of the process as a whole.

## THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW BEFORE YOU GET STARTED

### BEFORE YOU COMMIT TO OPEN A FACILITY:

If you would like to open a family child care facility, the first thing you need to do is contact a regulatory specialist with the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources (DHHR). A regulatory specialist is the go-to person to help you obtain a license for your facility. They will support you and answer any questions you might have along the way.

Click [HERE](#) to contact a regulatory specialist.

To obtain a license, there are two things you must do: first, you need to complete a Needs Assessment and Letter of Intent; second, you need to fill out an Initial Application. These documents involve multi-step processes and will be submitted at a later stage. You can find more details below.

## WHEN YOU ARE SOMEWHAT COMMITTED TO OPENING A FACILITY:

### NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND LETTER OF INTENT PHASE:

Before renting or buying a space for your facility, you need to be in touch with the [Office of the State Fire Marshal \(OSFM\)](#) and the [local Health Department \(HD\)](#). They will ensure that your potential space is in line with current regulations, which can stop you from wasting money on a space that is not suited for a facility and help you save money on potential renovations.

It is at this point you will work with a regulatory specialist to turn in a Needs Assessment and Letter of Intent to the DHHR.

Now it is time to consider how you will develop your business and marketing plan. A business and marketing plan is key to the success of your facility.

These plans are important because they will help you maintain your facility for years to come and grow it when you are ready. Facilities often operate on very thin margins, and a business and marketing plan will help you make ends meet. In addition, these plans can help you:

- Expand your program over time
- Increase the number of families you can serve
- Increase staff pay
- Stay in business even if something out of your control happens

The WV SBDC business coach will help you work on a plan. Below is the contact information for the coach.

[WV SBDC](#)  
[888-WVA-SBDC](tel:888-WVA-SBDC)   [AskMe@wv.gov](mailto:AskMe@wv.gov)

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## WHEN YOU ARE COMMITTED TO OPENING A FACILITY:

### INITIAL APPLICATION PHASE:

Now that you are sure you want to open a facility, it is time to submit your Initial Application to the DHHR. At this stage, you will continue to work with a regulatory specialist and WV SBDC business coach. If the DHHR approves your application, you will receive a license to operate.

Once you are ready to open, there are a few things you should keep in mind.

We have asked many top-notch providers what the keys are to running a successful facility. Here is what they had to say:

- Create a solid budget for your facility and stick to it (a business coach can help you).
- Focus on the quality of your program and let quality guide your decisions.
- Surround yourself with the best staff. That will help you achieve your program goals. Without quality staff you cannot have a quality program. Furthermore, quality is more important than quantity.
- Make sure you and your staff always do what is best for the child.
- Have either staff or tools to manage your facility's budget. That could be an accountant or a tool like QuickBooks.
- Always keep an open line of communication with your staff. That way you will know if your staff is happy, which will help prevent turnover.
- Get parents and the community involved, which can help you get in-kind support and donations.

## USING THIS GUIDE

This guide explains how to obtain a license to open a facility. It includes helpful tips, resources, and ways to supplement your prospective facility's budget as well.

We have created a checklist that you can find at the end of this document to help ensure you will not miss any important steps.

Remember, you can always lean on the regulatory specialist and business coach to guide you. They will make sure you have access to everything you need to succeed in your business.

## INTRODUCTION

The early care and education (ECE) industry is essential to growing West Virginia's economy. Access to ECE is an essential service and a key piece of our infrastructure. Its services allow families to work or go to school. Providers not only care for children and keep them safe but also support their development and school readiness. ECE providers educate and prepare the next generation of workers, which directly impacts the size and quality of the future workforce.



## KEY WORDS AND ACRONYMS:

**APPLICATION TO OPERATE A FAMILY CHILD CARE FACILITY**  
(INITIAL APPLICATION)

**EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION**  
(ECE)

**FAMILY CHILD CARE FACILITY**  
(CHILD CARE FACILITY or FACILITY)

**MOUNTAINHEART COMMUNITY SERVICES NORTH CHILD CARE RESOURCE AND REFERRAL**  
(MOUNTAINHEART NORTH CCR&R)

**NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND LETTER OF INTENT**  
(LETTER OF INTENT)

**OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICES** (OEHS)

**OFFICE OF THE STATE FIRE MARSHAL** (OSFM)

**SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION** (SBA)

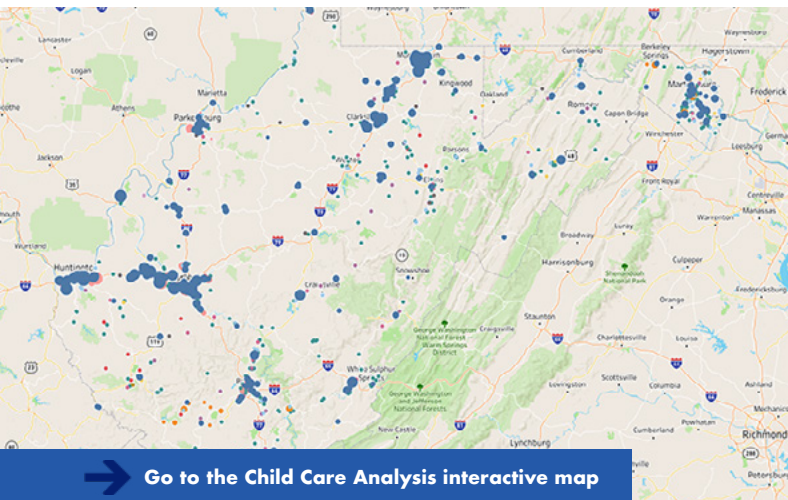
**WEST VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE** (WVDA)

**WEST VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN RESOURCES** (DHHR)

**WEST VIRGINIA SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTER** (WV SBDC)

**WEST VIRGINIA STATE TRAINING AND REGISTRY SYSTEM** (WV STARS)

# CHILD CARE INTERACTIVE MAP



West Virginia has many child care deserts, which are areas where there are more than three children under age five for every licensed ECE slot.

The [Child Care Analysis](#) map offers a clear picture of ECE deserts, which can be great locations for new facilities. There is an urgent need for new ECE providers, which help support local businesses and ensure that employers have access to a reliable and productive labor force.

Families, in turn, can find the services they need in order to work and provide for their loved ones.

As of April 2021, West Virginia has a total of 1,326 licensed ECE providers, including the following in the MountainHeart North CCR&R region: Barbour (26), Berkeley (114), Grant (9), Hampshire (9), Hardy (11), Jefferson (58), Lewis (19), Mineral (19), Morgan (9), Pendleton (4), Preston (15), Randolph (49), Taylor (12), Tucker (13), and Upshur (16).

The map includes all licensed ECE providers in West Virginia. It also includes detailed data on the number, type, and capacity of providers by region. You will also find salaries for ECE workers by county and much more.

You can use the Provider County, Provider City, and Provider Zip Code filters to select areas in the MountainHeart North CCR&R region.

In addition, the map also provides relevant workforce data, like information regarding the number of single parents and married couples who are in the labor force.

The Ross Foundation will update the map annually.

# STEP-BY-STEP: HOW TO APPLY FOR A LICENSE TO OPEN A CHILD CARE FACILITY

## OVERVIEW

The [West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources \(DHHR\)](#) oversees the issuance of a license to operate ECE businesses.

The DHHR works with the [West Virginia Department of Agriculture \(WVDA\)](#), the [Office of Environmental Health Services \(OEHS\)](#) or local health department, and the [Office of the State Fire Marshal \(OSFM\)](#) on different parts of the licensing process. A license is valid for up to two years from the date of issuance.

## DEFINITION

A **family child care facility** is any facility used to offer ECE services for compensation for seven to 12 children, including children who are living in the household and are under six years of age. A facility may be in an ECE provider's home or in another building.

## HOW TO OBTAIN A LICENSE TO OPERATE

If you would like to open a facility, it is a good idea to start by reading the [Family Child Care Facility Information Packet](#). It has general information, basic requirements, and answers to frequently asked questions.

Throughout the licensing process, make sure you read the [Family Child Care Facility Licensing Requirements](#), which explains regulations for child care facilities.

# PART 1.) NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND LETTER OF INTENT

The first step in applying for a license is to contact a [regulatory specialist](#), the [OSFM](#), and the [local health department \(HD\)](#). They will provide you with initial information. You can find a list of HD in the MountainHeart North CCR&R region in Table 1. Please be sure to contact the OSFM and the HD before you buy or sign a lease for your facility. They will make sure that your desired space is in line with regulations. Please keep the regulatory specialist in the loop during these conversations.

You will need to fill out a [Needs Assessment and Letter of Intent](#) (Letter of Intent). The Letter of Intent, which has 12 sections, is how the DHHR determines if there's a need for a new ECE businesses in a given location. Through the Letter of Intent, the DHHR also evaluates if a potential provider meets basic requirements.

You do not need to have a finalized answer to every question at this time; however, the more information you have, the easier it will be for you to complete your Initial Application later.

**SECTION 1** asks your full name and address as well as the name and address of your prospective facility.

- If you are planning to open a facility in your home, you only need to fill out the owner/operator information in Section 1.

**SECTIONS 2 AND 3:** The [Child Care Analysis](#) map and [WV STARS](#) should help you fill out these sections. The Analysis map has data on providers by location, capacity, and ages of children served. You will also find employment data and wages for ECE workers. WV STARS has information on online and in-person ECE training. Once you are open, WV STARS can help you keep your training up to date.

- The WV SBDC business coach can help you use the Analysis map and WV STARS. You can find contact information for the coaches under [Technical Support and Resources](#).
- **Section 2** has questions about providers in the area where you would like to open your facility. It asks for the number, type, and hours of operation of existing providers, and if they have waiting lists. You will be asked to include the ages of the children they serve and average wages for ECE workers.

- **Section 3** asks questions about ECE training you have completed or plan to complete. You will need to be certified in CPR or complete first aid training. You also must have at least six months of experience in caring for children in a licensed program. For a more complete explanation, see pages 5 and 6 of the [Information Packet](#).

**SECTION 4:** if the building where you would like to open your facility was built before 1978, you must contact a Lead Risk Assessor via the [Lead Program](#). The Lead Program will connect you with a licensed Lead Risk Assessor who can assist you. This assessment is to protect you, your staff, and the children in your program from lead poisoning.

COUNTY	HD WEBSITES	HD PHONE #
<b>BARBOUR</b>	<a href="#">Barbour County HD</a>	<a href="#">304-457-1670</a>
<b>BERKELEY</b>	<a href="#">Berkeley-Morgan County HD</a>	<a href="#">304-267-7130</a>
<b>GRANT</b>	<a href="#">Grant County HD</a>	<a href="#">304-257-4922</a>
<b>HAMPSHIRE</b>	<a href="#">Hampshire County HD</a>	<a href="#">304-496-9641</a>
<b>HARDY</b>	<a href="#">Hardy County HD</a>	<a href="#">304-530-6355</a>
<b>JEFFERSON</b>	<a href="#">Jefferson County HD</a>	<a href="#">304-728-8415</a>
<b>LEWIS</b>	<a href="#">Lewis County HD</a>	<a href="#">304-269-8218</a>
<b>MINERAL</b>	<a href="#">Mineral County HD</a>	<a href="#">304-788-1321</a>
<b>MORGAN</b>	<a href="#">Berkeley-Morgan County HD</a>	<a href="#">304-258-1513</a>
<b>PENDLETON</b>	<a href="#">Pendleton County HD</a>	<a href="#">304-358-7565</a>
<b>PRESTON</b>	<a href="#">Preston County HD</a>	<a href="#">304-329-0096</a>
<b>RANDOLPH</b>	<a href="#">Randolph County HD</a>	<a href="#">304-636-0396</a>
<b>TAYLOR</b>	<a href="#">Taylor County HD</a>	<a href="#">304-265-1288</a>
<b>TUCKER</b>	<a href="#">Tucker County HD</a>	<a href="#">304-478-3572</a>
<b>UPSHUR</b>	<a href="#">Upshur County HD</a>	<a href="#">304-472-2810</a>

**TABLE 1.** Contact Information for Local Health Departments in the MountainHeart North CCR&R Region<sup>1</sup>

- The Assessor will put together a report that you will need to submit to the DHHR and the HD. The report will have recommendations that your facility will need to follow.

**SECTION 5:** Review the [OSFM Minimum Requirements for ECE businesses](#). Then fill out the [OSFM Initial Inspection Request](#) and mail it to the address in the form. You will need to pay a \$25 fee.

<sup>1</sup> Many HD websites are not updated regularly, so the best way to get up to date information about permits is by phone



- The OSFM will be in touch with you about next steps and will later issue a Fire Safety Inspection Report. You will need to attach the Report to your Initial Application (see [Part 2](#)).

**SECTION 6:** To complete this section, you will work with the HD that serves the county where you plan to open your facility. You can find a list of HD in the MountainHeart North CCR&R region in Table 1.

- First, you should fill out a [SG-99 Child Care Center Plan Review Information Report](#). You will need to attach a floor plan for your facility and kitchen<sup>2</sup> to the SG-99. You should also include a menu and explanation of how you plan to sanitize dishes. Once you gather all these documents, please submit them to the HD.
- A plan review (form SG-99) is for a facility that is new, under renovation, or has a new owner. Some HD charge plan review fees. For example, the Berkeley-Morgan County HD<sup>3</sup> charges a plan review fee of \$50 for a SG-99.
- Your facility must serve healthy meals to children in your program. The goal is to meet or work toward meeting the current [USDA Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#), which includes making sure that all children are fed regularly.
- Employees who will cook the food for your facility will need to take a food safety course. The [StateFoodSafety®: Online Training for Food Workers](#) is accepted by most counties in the MountainHeart North CCR&R region, except for Berkeley, Morgan, Randolph, and Upshur. Randolph and Upshur counties accept the [Tap Series®: Food Handler Training](#) online course. The Berkeley-Morgan County HD accept the [ServSafe Food Handler](#) online course. Your food workers will need to complete training within 30 days of hire. Online training for a 2-year Statewide Card costs up to \$30.
- You must also be a certified food protection manager. To follow this regulation, you must pass a test from an [ANSI-CFP Accredited Program](#). Online training and

<sup>2</sup> A floor plan for your facility and kitchen must be drawn to scale, i.e., the drawings need to show the layout of the physical objects in your facility relative to their original size. A floor plan should include restrooms, play areas, and the kitchen area.

<sup>3</sup> Berkeley and Morgan counties share a health department.

<sup>4</sup> Food Protection Manager Certification exams must be monitored by an approved proctor. Proctors are responsible for monitoring exam sessions to ensure that exams are taken fairly. For more details, please contact an [ANSI-CFP Accredited Program](#).

<sup>5</sup> The Fee for Permit included in this guide was set by the State in 2020. The State revises the maximum fee for a permit from time to time.



→ Employees who will cook the food for your facility will need to take a food safety course.

exam costs start at \$78 (plus the Proctor Fee<sup>4</sup>) and the certification is usually valid for 5 years.

- In-person food safety and certified food protection manager courses are also available at some HD. Check with the HD where you would like to open your facility for upcoming training sessions and any additional steps or fees.
- Once the HD approves your SG-99, the next step is to fill out a [SG-49 Application for a Permit to Operate](#). Then you will need to send the SG-49 to the HD together with the [Fee for Permit](#)<sup>5</sup>.
- The HD charges a fee to issue a permit for child care facilities. For facilities, the maximum fee for a permit is \$60. While the State sets the highest amount a county or HD can charge from child care providers, a HD usually does not charge the maximum fee for a permit.
- Permits are valid for one year and expire on December 31.
- Once the HD reviews and approves your SG-49, they will contact you to set up an opening inspection. Before the inspection, you will need to have the go ahead from the OSFM.
- Depending on your facility's location, city officials may do other inspections. You will also need to follow other guidelines and recommendations due to COVID-19. Contact the HD for more information.

- After you complete all these steps, the HD will do an opening inspection at your facility. If everything checks out, you will receive a permit to open a child care facility. You will receive the inspection report from the HD together with your permit. You will need to attach all these documents to your Initial Application (see [Part 2](#)).
- The HD will inspect your facility initially and then twice a year.
- Remember that a permit is not a license. A permit shows to the DHHR that the HD has approved your facility space. It is the DHHR that is in charge of issuing a license to operate.
- Children must be between six weeks and 12 years of age.
- The DHHR requires a facility to keep a 1:6 staff-child ratio. If there are more than six children present or more than two children under the age of two, a second person must be on duty; essentially, once your facility begins to serve a third child under the age of two or a seventh child, a second staff must be present.

**SECTION 7:** You will need to submit an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) plan packet to the WVDA. The goal of an IPM plan is to protect children and staff from pesticides.

- First, read the [Your Integrated Pest Management Program](#) for an overview of IPM. Then read the [Integrated Pest Management Programs in Schools and Child Care Centers/Facilities](#).
- You can find answers to frequently asked questions about the IPM plan on pages 2 to 4 of the [Information Packet](#).
- Please call [304-558-2209](tel:304-558-2209) to request an IPM plan packet. Once you review the packet, submit an Integrated Pest Management Plan to the WVDA. The WVDA will later send you an approval letter. You will submit the letter to the DHHR.
- You will also need to do an initial inspection of your facility. Pages 32-34 of the Best Management Practices booklet have a Sanitation and Maintenance Report (the booklet is included in the IPM plan packet). Either you or the pest control company of your choice can use the Report to do an initial inspection.
- Remember that the State allows you to operate a facility in your home. However, you are only allowed to care for up to 12 children at one time. If you would like to care for more than 12 children at one time, you will need to open a child care center.
- To follow regulations, your facility needs to have 35 square feet of activity space per child. See [Family Child Care Facility Licensing Requirements](#) for more details.
- For the outdoor area, your facility needs to have 75 square feet of activity space per child. The outdoor play area can be on the property or within walking distance.
- This information will help you determine the exact number of children you are able to serve at your facility. Make sure you include your own children who are under the age of six in your calculation. Keep in mind that your facility can only care for up to four infants/toddlers (six weeks to two years old) at one time.
- Before signing a lease or purchasing a property, think about the number of children you would like to serve. Be sure to choose a building with enough space. This will also help you estimate how much income you will need to pay for expenses.

**SECTION 10** is about background checks. You do not need to request background checks at this point. You can wait until you start filling out an Initial Application.

**SECTION 8:** The WV SBDC business coach will help you fill out this section. You can find their contact information under [Technical Support and Resources](#).

- You will need to submit proof that you have enough money to pay for six months of operating expenses. You will also need to have enough funds to buy equipment, materials, and supplies. A business coach will help you estimate running costs for your facility.
- Remember that the OSFM and the HD need to approve your facility equipment.

**SECTION 9** asks for general information about your facility, including spatial needs, curriculum, and the age of the children that will be in your program.

**SECTION 11** is related to zoning laws and business registration.

- The West Virginia Secretary of State's Office (WVSOS) [Business Division](#) handles [business registrations](#). You can register your business online, through the [One Stop Business Portal](#) or by mail.
- The WVSOS process most business filings immediately or within a few days. Expedited services are also available. If you have questions, please contact the licensing staff at [304-558-8000](tel:304-558-8000). They are also available by [email](#) (type "business & licensing" in the search box).

- The County Commission or municipality where you would like to open your facility can answer questions about zoning laws. Once you finish this process, you will receive a business license.

**SECTION 12** is the signature section. Once you fill out the Letter of Intent, you should mail it to the address below.

West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources  
Bureau for Children and Families  
Division of Early Care and Education  
Child Care Regulation Unit  
350 Capitol Street, Room B-18 Charleston, WV 25301

Remember that the Letter of Intent is not a license application, but it will become part of your Initial Application.

## PART 2.) APPLICATION TO OPERATE A FAMILY CHILD CARE FACILITY (INITIAL APPLICATION)

Once the DHHR receives your Letter of Intent, a [regulatory specialist](#) will review it. If it is complete, the DHHR will send you an Application to Operate a Family Child Care Facility (Initial Application). The Initial Application, which has 17 sections, asks for more details about your facility. You will need to provide relevant documentation.

- Make sure you read the [Family Child Care Facility Licensing Requirements](#), which describes the regulations you must follow.
- The Initial Application comes with instructions. Below is a summary of the information requested in each section.

**SECTION 1** asks for your name, date of birth, phone number, and social security number. You will also need to include your mailing and/or physical address.

**SECTIONS 2 AND 3** ask for information about your race and ethnicity. You need to include this information due to Federal reporting standards.

**SECTION 4:** You will now add the name and address of your facility. You can either choose a unique name or use your own name to open your facility. Please include directions to your facility from the closest major street or highway.

**SECTION 5:** You do have the option to open your facility in a residential home. If that is the case, please provide information about the people living in the home, including both current and part time residents. Please list their names, social security numbers, and birth dates.

**SECTION 6** asks for the names of the children you will care for and their birth dates. This section can be left blank since this is an Initial Application.

- However, if you have children of your own living in the home under the age of six, you will also need to add them to the list.

**SECTION 7** asks for the number of children you plan to care for, including any of your own children listed in Section 6.

**SECTIONS 8 AND 9:** You will enter the planned days and hours of operation for your facility.

**SECTION 10** requires you to explain experiences and training you have in ECE.

**SECTION 11:** Remember that the DHHR requires facilities to keep a 1:6 staff-child ratio. In this section, you will enter information about you and your staff.

- List the names, addresses, and phone numbers of those who will be caring for children in your facility, i.e., people in charge of direct care and supervision of children.

**SECTIONS 12 AND 13** ask if you have been licensed or registered to care for children inside or outside of the state. If yes, you will enter more details about your license/registration, including the location (city, county, state) and type of license/registration.

**SECTIONS 13 THROUGH 15** include 16 statements you must read. The statements outline expectations for you, your staff, and your program.

You do not need to answer any questions, with the exception of 13.F. Your signature at the end of the Initial Application will show to the DHHR that you understand and will follow all requirements. Below are bullet points that can help you better understand some of the statements.





→ Your facility can only care for up to

# 12

children at one time

- The [Family Child Care Facility Licensing Requirements](#) has information on rules you will need to follow.
- The DHHR requires you to have fire and liability insurance for your facility. You should keep copies of the proofs of insurance in your facility.
- You cannot transfer your license to a new address or to another person. If you would like to change the location of your facility, you will need to apply for a new license.
- Your facility can only care for up to 12 children at one time, including up to four infants/toddlers. See [Section 9 of the Letter of Intent](#) for more details.
- A license to operate a child care facility is valid for two years. At the end of the two years, you will need to submit a Renewal Application to the DHHR.

**SECTION 16** is the signature section. Once you fill out your Initial Application, you should mail it to the address below. There is currently no processing fee for the Initial Application.

West Virginia Department of  
Health & Human Resources  
Division of Early Care & Education  
350 Capital Street, room B-18  
Charleston, WV 25301

- The DHHR has 60 days to make a decision on an application. The DHHR can only decide if your license will be granted or denied if you turn in a complete Initial Application.
- For the duration of the pandemic, all child care facilities need to [register](#) to become a Temporary Crisis Child Care Site. To do that, you will need to fill out a [Registration for Temporary Crisis Child Care Site](#) and a [Child Care Site Self-Certification Checklist](#). Please send these documents to [ECEProviders@wv.gov](mailto:ECEProviders@wv.gov).

**SECTION 17** lists all documents you will need to attach to your application. Below are more details about each attachment.

#### **Child Care Provider Medical Report**

- The DHHR needs to have a [Child Care Provider Medical Report](#) for you on file. You must hand in a copy of the Report within 30 days of submitting your Initial Application.

- You can also submit a similar medical exam if it was completed within the past six months; that is, six months before the date you submitted your Initial Application.

### **Child Care Provider Information Form**

- You need to submit a [Child Care Provider Information](#) form. This form asks information about your child care program, including how much you will charge per age group and the type of care you will provide.
- You need to specify if you would like to have parents referred to your program, and if you will accept subsidized children. Please include days and hours of operation for your facility.
- The form also asks if you are registered with [WV STARS](#). WV STARS has information on training available to providers online and across the state. WV STARS can help you complete basic training for family child care providers.
- You will only fill out the last section if you plan to accept referrals.

### **First Aid/Choke Saving Verification**

- You need to provide proof that you are certified in CPR or have completed first aid training, which includes rescue breathing and first aid for choking. As an alternative, you can submit a statement on how you plan to receive this training within three months.
- The [American Red Cross](#) provides CPR and first aid training. The Red Cross offers both hybrid and in-person training. [Red Cross Training in West Virginia](#) can be used to search for training near you.

### **Tax Identification Form (W-9)**

- The DHHR needs a Tax Identification Form W-9 for your facility. You will need to fill out a [Provider Tax Identification Reporting Form](#). The Form asks for your social security number and other tax information.
- The Form is pretty simple, but if you have questions, a regulatory specialist or the [MountainHeart North CCR&R](#) can help you. See [Technical Support and Resources](#) for more information.

### **Background Checks**

- You and your staff must complete a few background checks, including a [state and federal criminal check](#), an [adult and child protective services check](#), and a check of both the [state](#) and [federal](#) sex offender registries.

- Those who have lived out-of-state during the past five years must also submit an out-of-state background check.
- Those who work in WV but live in another state must turn in a background check from the state they live in. To request an adult and child protective services check, complete an [Authorization and Release for Protective Services Record Check \(Non-WV Resident\)](#).
- [WV CARES](#) handles state and federal background checks for ECE businesses. WV CARES also checks the state and federal sex offender registries. You can contact WV CARES by phone at [304-558-2018](#) or email at [wvcare@wv.gov](mailto:wvcare@wv.gov). Pages 6 and 7 of the [Information Packet](#) explain how to register with WV CARES.
- WV CARES will email you an eligibility determination letter based on the results of the background checks.
- To request an adult and child protective services check, complete an [Authorization and Release for Protective Services Record Check \(WV Resident\)](#).
- Before you can open your facility, you and your staff must have an eligibility determination letter from WV CARES. If your facility is located in your home, all residents living in the home must also have an eligibility determination letter from WV CARES. You will attach the letters to your Initial Application.

### **Permit and Inspections Reports**

- You will need to attach the inspection reports from the OSFM and the HD to your Initial Application. Also, please include a permit to operate a facility from the HD. If you have questions, see [Sections 5 and 6 of the Letter of Intent](#).

### **Emergency and Evacuation Plans**

- Please include emergency and evacuation plans for your facility. These plans are required for the initial inspection from the DHHR. Your plans must be specific to the county and region where you would like to open your facility.



- The [Family Child Care Facility Licensing Requirements](#) can guide as you create your plans. You can use the DHHR [Emergency Plan](#) form for your facility’s plans or create your own form.
- The [West Virginia Emergency Management \(WVEM\)](#) can help you put together an evacuation plan. Each county has an Emergency Management (EM) department. You can use these [contact numbers](#) to get in touch with your local EM department. You must fill out an evacuation plan annually with the Emergency Services Director.
- The DHHR also has information for providers who are developing plans. You can read more details in the DHHR [Emergency Preparedness Resources](#) (scroll all the way to the bottom).

## CHILD CARE SUBSIDY PROGRAM AND FINANCIAL AID TO FAMILIES

### CHILD CARE SUBSIDY PROGRAM

A good way to supplement your facility’s budget is to take part in the child care subsidy program. The DHHR calls it the [tiered reimbursement system](#).

In this program, providers that meet higher standards of care receive higher subsidies. Once you get a license for your facility, you will be eligible to receive Tier I rates. You will only receive subsidy payments for children who qualify for subsidies. After your first year, you are eligible to apply for Tier II or Tier III rates. Tier II and Tier III programs receive [\\$3.00 and \\$6.00 extra daily](#)<sup>6</sup> per full day of care per child. Subsidy amounts also depend on the age of the child in care. Tier III providers must be nationally accredited through the [National Association for the Education of Young Children \(NAEYC\)](#) or the [National Association for Family Child Care \(NAFCC\)](#).

If you would like to enroll, please submit a [Tiered Reimbursement Application for Family Child Care Facilities](#).

You can also ask questions about the program by [email](#).

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<sup>6</sup> The reimbursement rates listed in this section are effective [March 1, 2021 through December 31, 2022](#).

### FINANCIAL AID TO FAMILIES

Families in West Virginia have access to financial support to help them pay for child care. The State gives child care certificates to eligible families to pay for services. Families may receive financial help if their monthly gross income is below 150 percent of the annual [Federal Poverty Level \(FPL\)](#). Monthly gross income is income before taxes and deductions. Financial help is also based on the size of the family. Eligible families receive financial aid until their income exceeds 185 percent of the annual FPL. Families with incomes below 40 percent of the FPL are eligible for free child care. Families with incomes between 40 percent and 185 percent of the FPL pay an increasing tuition fee.

You may want to consider working with the [MountainHeart North CCR&R](#) to connect eligible families to the financial support they need to pay for ECE services. The MountainHeart North CCR&R has many resources for parents and caregivers.

## TECHNICAL SUPPORT AND RESOURCES

[WV SBDC](#)

[888-WVA-SBDC](#)    [AskMe@wv.gov](#)

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### [Starting and Operating a Child Care Business – Resource Guide:](#)

The [Child Care State Capacity Building Center](#) has developed a guide with many helpful resources. It has basic steps for starting and operating a successful child care facility.

### [Child Care Business Resources: Estimated Start-up Costs:](#)

This webpage has information on startup costs for ECE businesses. It can help you better plan your finances as you take steps to open your facility.

### [West Virginia Early Childhood Training Connections and Resources:](#)

The WVECTCR is a program that offers professional development opportunities for ECE workers. It is a network of information with training and technical help for providers. The WVECTCR can offer the support you need to start a quality program. You can contact them at [304-529-7603](#) or by email at [tcr@rvcds.org](#).

### [KEYS 4 HealthyKids:](#)

KEYS 4 HealthyKids is a grant-funded childhood obesity prevention initiative that has been serving West Virginia’s

kids, families, and communities since 2009. Through policy, systems, and environmental changes (or PSEs), KEYS 4 HealthyKids is on a mission to make the healthy choice the easy choice in the Mountain State. To learn more about how to incorporate best practices in nutrition and physical activity at your facility or to register for upcoming training events, follow [KEYS 4 Healthy Kids on Facebook](#) or sign-up for its [newsletter](#).

The [Child Care Resource and Referral \(CCR&R\) agencies](#) support providers and the families they serve. The CCR&R agencies offer technical assistance and training to new and existing providers. They also manage the subsidy program and connect parents with child care services and financial aid. Below is a list of counties served by the [MountainHeart North CCR&R](#).

- Barbour, Berkeley, Grant, Hampshire, Hardy, Jefferson, Lewis, Mineral, Morgan, Pendleton, Preston, Randolph, Taylor, Tucker, and Upshur.

The [MountainHeart CCR&R](#) also has a list of [best practices](#) in opening a child care facility, including helpful tips on how to get started and information on how to become a provider.

#### [Early Care Share West Virginia:](#)

Early Care Share WV is a platform that offers a one-stop location for key resources that will help you save time, reduce costs, and improve the quality of your program. Members have access to ECE policies, forms, guidance, regulations, discounts, and more. For more details, please email [Help@EarlyCareShareWV.org](mailto:Help@EarlyCareShareWV.org).

#### [West Virginia Family Child Care Association:](#)

The WVFCCA offers services and support for family child care providers. The goal is to help providers who want to offer quality family child care in West Virginia. The WVFCCA has grant money to pay for your membership. If you would like to join, you can contact them by [email](#).

#### [Experience Adventures in Family Child Care! An Introductory Presentation for Potential Providers:](#)

The [MountainHeart CCR&R](#) has put together a wonderful presentation for potential new ECE providers. It includes

questions for you to think about as you consider a career in ECE, basic training requirements, and some of the steps you will need to complete to become a provider.

#### [TRAILS \(Traveling Resource and Information Library System\):](#)

TRAILS is an outreach program that offers resources of interest to providers. That includes one-on-one support and tools to improve the quality of their programs. Tools include books, games, age-appropriate toys, and assistive technology for special needs children. TRAILS is a free program offered by [CCR&R agencies](#). Those in the program receive visits from specialists who travel in a medium sized van. Van visits take place every six to 12 weeks. If you would like to participate, once you get your license, please contact the [MountainHeart North CCR&R](#).

#### [Child Care Facilities Provider Forms:](#)

The DHHR has created a central location for important forms for child care facilities providers. Make sure you also contact the [MountainHeart North CCR&R](#) to schedule a new provider orientation.

#### [National Child Care Association:](#)

The NCCA has been a trusted, nonpartisan voice for licensed providers of quality ECE programs since 1987. It focuses on promoting the success of licensed providers in quality ECE, including the provision of professional development, advocacy, and community engagement. The NCCA offers [free webinars](#) on an array of topics that are of value for ECE providers.

## BEST PRACTICES IN MANAGING A CHILD CARE BUSINESS

Managing a successful child care business can be challenging. Providers often have access to limited funding and face high operational costs. However, it is still possible to run a sustainable child care facility. You can improve your chances of success by following [best practices](#). A solid business and marketing plan can also increase your chances of long-term sustainability and success.

A business plan is a document that has your business' goals and explains how and when you will achieve these goals. Your business plan will need to include short-term long-term, and alternative plans for various situations, like unexpected expenses/events.





→ Be sure that your primary

# FOCUS

is on the quality of your program.

The WV SBDC business coach can help you put together a business plan. You can find their contact information under [Technical Support and Resources](#). The information in the next sections can help you save on startup and operational costs.

## **PARTICIPATION IN THE FOOD PROGRAM**

A great way to supplement your facility's budget is taking part in the [Child and Adult Care Food Program \(CACFP\)](#). The CACFP is a federal program managed by states. CACFP [reimburses](#) providers who serve healthy meals and snacks to children.

The [WVDE Office of Child Nutrition](#) manages the CACFP in West Virginia. To take part in the CACFP, you need to have a license to operate a facility, and children must be receiving nonresidential child care in a private home. If you open a facility in a place that is not a home, you are not eligible to enroll in the program. You must also be willing to follow the meal patterns of the [USDA CACFP Nutrition Standards](#).

On average, in-home providers received \$100 a month per child. You may be eligible to receive Tier I or Tier II reimbursement rates. Tier I rates are higher than Tier II rates. You may qualify for Tier I rates if your home is located

in a low-income area or if you serve low-income children. Remember that this program is different from the DHHR's [tiered reimbursement system](#). You must sign an agreement with a sponsoring organization to enroll in the program. For more information on how to enroll, contact a [Child Care Food Program Sponsor](#).

## **HELPFUL TIPS AND COST MANAGEMENT TOOL**

### **HELPFUL TIPS**

Managing a child care business requires a unique combination of skills. You will need to have a strong knowledge of ECE as well as business management. You will not be just caring for and educating children but also running a small business.

Consider taking advantage of the SBA free online training opportunities. The [SBA Learning Center](#) has great courses you can take at your own pace and time.

Be sure to create a budget from the get-go, and that you stick to it. It will help you better control your finances and avoid going into debt.



Be sure that your primary focus is on the quality of your program, and that you let quality guide your business decisions.

You will need to build a culture of quality and safety as well as make sure your staff always do what is best for the child. You want to have the best staff to help you achieve your program goals, and staff training can help you achieve that.

Avoid attempting to expand your business too soon, which can harm both your finances and your chances of succeeding.

### **SMALL BUSINESS TOOLS AND SUPPORT**

Managing a child care business requires you to be pennywise. You will need to know how to manage your staff and finances well to succeed. This is so important: It can make or break your business.

Thankfully, you do not need to worry about taking care of all of this by yourself!

There are online tools that can help you do your own accounting and financial management. [QuickBooks](#) is an example of a useful tool that can help you manage your staff and budget. It helps new and existing businesses manage their payroll, track expenses, staff hours, and much more.

[QuickBooks Support](#) can help you learn how to use and operate QuickBooks.

### **PAYROLL**

Please keep in mind that you will need to file a [Form W-2](#) (and not a Form 1099) for staff working with children in your program. Some providers use the services of an accountant while others use a software like [Procare](#) or [brightwheel](#) for a monthly fee or free online payroll services like [Payroll4Free.com](#).

### **COST MANAGEMENT TOOL**

Another excellent resource for providers is a [Cost Management Tool](#). The purpose of the tool is to help those



→ There are online tools that can help you do your own accounting and financial management.

interested in opening or expanding ECE businesses plan their budgets, i.e., better estimate revenue and expenses.

The tool can be edited based on the features of a child care center, facility, or home, including provider type, location, tier level, whether you own or rent the space, and more. The tool was developed by MBA students with the [Encova Center](#). If you would like to get more information, please contact the WV SBDC business coach.

→ The Cost Management Tool helps those interested in opening or expanding ECE businesses

# **PLAN BUDGETS,**

i.e., better estimate revenue and expenses.

# LICENSING PROCESS:

## FAMILY CHILD CARE FACILITIES

### BEFORE YOU GET STARTED:

- Contact a regulatory specialist
- Reach out to the MountainHeart North CCR&R
- Contact the WV SBDC Business Coach
- Read the Information Packet

### BEFORE YOU BUY, RENOVATE OR RENT A SPACE FOR YOUR FACILITY YOU NEED TO:

- Contact the OSFM and the HD
- Check with the regulatory specialist to make sure your space meets spatial requirements (sq/ft/child)

### PART 1.) NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND LETTER OF INTENT

#### ONCE THE OSFM AND THE HD HAVE GIVEN THE INITIAL THUMBS UP FOR YOUR FACILITY SPACE:

- Get an inspection report from the OSFM
- Get a report from a Lead Risk Assessor (only if the building was built before 1978)

#### TO GET A PERMIT TO OPERATE FROM THE HD, YOU WILL NEED TO SUBMIT A:

- SF-99: plan review for your facility

#### ONCE THE HD APPROVES YOUR SF-99, PLEASE SUBMIT A:

- SG-49: application for a permit to open a facility

#### ONCE THE HD APPROVES YOUR SG-49, YOU SHOULD RECEIVE A:

- Permit to operate a facility
- Initial inspection report

#### THE WVDA WILL NEED A:

- Integrated and Pest Management Plan
- Sanitation and Maintenance Report

#### **ZONING LAWS AND BUSINESS REGISTRATION:**

- Register your facility with the WVSOS
- Contact the county and municipality about zoning laws
- Create a draft budget with business coach
- Turn in a complete Needs Assessment and Letter of Intent to the DHHR

#### **PART 2.) INITIAL APPLICATION**

- Get Initial Application from the DHHR
- Read Licensing Requirements
- Create an estimated budget with a business coach
- Have money to cover six months of operating expenses
- You and your staff meet basic training/education needs
- Create emergency disaster and evacuation plans
- Fill out an evacuation plan with the county Emergency Services Director

#### **APPLICATION ATTACHMENTS:**

- Child Care Provider Medical Report
- Child Care Provider Information Form
- First Aid/Choke Saving Verification Form
- Tax Identification Form (W-9)

#### **BACKGROUND CHECKS:**

- WV CARES eligibility determination letter for you
- WV CARES eligibility determination letter for your staff
- For in-home providers: WV CARES eligibility determination letter for all residents
- Turn in a complete Initial Application to the DHHR

#### **ONCE YOU GET YOUR LICENSE, THE DHHR NEEDS YOU TO:**

- Register as a Temporary Crisis Child Care facility
- Submit a Child Care Site Self-Certification Checklist

#### **OTHER NEEDS NOT CONNECTED TO THE LICENSING PROCESS:**

- Create a business plan together with the WV SBDC business coach



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