



Micro-Center Pilot Program Fast Facts

What is the Micro-Center Pilot Program?

During the 2023 legislative session, Senate Bill 1040 passed requiring the Oregon Department of Early Learning and Care (DELIC) to create a Micro-Center Pilot Program. This bill aims to create a sustainable framework for small capacity child care programs serving fewer than 30 children, ensuring high-quality learning opportunities across the state.

Pilot Guidelines:

This program seeks to help small capacity child care programs with their unique challenges by offering resources and individualized technical assistance. With support from The Child Care Licensing Division (CCLD), pilot participants will identify rules that cause difficulties in operating a small capacity child care program. They will address those challenges by applying for exceptions or waivers to identified licensing rules.

Goals of the Pilot:

The primary goal of the Micro-Center Pilot Program is to identify and ease barriers to licensing that make it harder for successful operations of small capacity programs in underserved communities. The data collected during the pilot will help with guiding the development of future regulations and policies that may help small capacity programs' viability. In addition, the information shared by participants will be used in a legislative report that will be completed at the end of the pilot. and may be used for other legislative workgroups that are currently addressing barriers for child care programs to expand their businesses.

Program Eligibility:

To be eligible to participate in the pilot, applicants must:

- Hold an active license administered by CCLD (certified center, certified family or registered family license)
- Serve a minimum of 3 children and have a maximum capacity of 30 children; and
- Provide child care programming for more than 4 hours a day.

This opportunity is open to any small capacity child care program across the state that meets the eligibility criteria listed above. The statute requires one program to be selected from each of the following areas:

- **The Oregon Coast:**
 - Includes the following counties: Clatsop, Tillamook, Lincoln, West Lane County (west of Eugene), west Douglas County (west of Roseburg), Coos, Curry Counties
- **Eastern Oregon:**
 - Includes the following counties: All Eastern Oregon (east of the Cascade mountains) Deschutes, Jefferson, Crook, Klamath, Wasco, Lake, Hood River Counties
- **The Willamette Valley:**

- Includes the following counties: Multnomah, Clackamas, Washington, Yamhill, Polk, Marion, Linn, Benton, Lane (To include, Eugene/Springfield-west of Eugene will be considered coastal; Douglas County (To include Roseburg, west of Roseburg would be considered Coastal), Jackson, Josephine Columbia Counties

Applicant and General Pilot Information:

To participate in the pilot, participants will have to do the following:

- Identify rules that cause difficulties operating a small capacity child care program;
- Work with CCLD to file for exceptions to those identified requirements*.
 - Multiple requests may be necessary to support the pilot program’s unique program needs;
- Follow the CCLD established guidelines for each request;
- Be willing to participate in the following activities:
 - Interviews with CCLD staff;
 - Complete surveys;
 - On-site visits by CCLD staff;
 - Participate in an exit interview upon completion of the pilot or if an applicant withdraws from the pilot.

Using the information provided by pilot participants, DELC will prepare and submit a report on the implementation of the micro-center pilot program and may include recommendations for legislation by September 15, 2025.

***Note:** Exceptions will not be granted if the requirement is established in statute or the health, safety, and well-being of children cannot be ensured. Since capacity limits for both Registered Family Home Child Care and Certified Family Home Child Care are established in statute, this requirement will not be eligible for an exception. In addition, exceptions cannot be granted to other government agency’s requirements.

Application and Selection Information:

To ensure participants have an equal opportunity to apply for this pilot, interested participants must submit a completed application through paper or electronic formats. Both are available by DELC. Due to multiple options for applying, DELC will begin looking at applications two weeks (14 days) after opening recruitment and will continue to review until three applicants for the pilot program have been selected. Applicants will be selected on a first-come first-served basis, and priority will be given to applicants who meet the following:

- Located in a community that has the greatest need for child care as determined by DELC. The Child Care Desert Report and other reports will be used by DELC as reference tools to assist with this determination.
- Eligible to take families who receive Employment Related Day Care (ERDC) assistance; and
- Enrolled or willing to enroll in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP).

Once three applicants have been selected, DELC will notify the successful candidates of this opportunity. An applicant selected for participation must confirm their interest in participating in the Micro-Center Pilot Program within **five** business days of being notified they were selected for participation. If an applicant does not respond within **five** business days, they must resubmit an application for the pilot. That application will be considered received on the date it is resubmitted.

DELIC hopes you are interested in applying for this unique opportunity to help identify existing barriers small capacity programs face. This pilot will assist with shaping future statute and rule recommendations, supporting small child care programs to thrive in Oregon and be accessible options for communities across the state.

Additional Resources:

Micro-Center Pilot Program Rules: [Micro-Center Pilot Program Rules](#)

Oregon's Child Care Deserts 2022: [Link to the Report](#)

To request a paper application or if you have additional questions, please contact Carol Petersen at carol.a.petersen@delc.oregon.gov