

# SMART START WORKFORCE GRANTS



## STEPS TO SUBMIT AN APPLICATION

### STEP 1: LOG IN TO DIRECTOR PORTAL

Go to <https://registry.ilgateways.com>, and click on “Dashboard Login.”

**Welcome back, Vicki** [REDACTED]

Thank you for maintaining current membership in the Gateways to Opportunity Registry. This Dashboard is your one-stop shop for all of the resources and tools available to Registry Members and Trainers. Select the “My Registry” portal below to view your Professional Development Record (PDR), self-report trainings, renew your Registry Membership and more. If you are a Registry-Approved Trainer, you may enter the “Trainer” portal to access the forms and training opportunities related to your work.

If you experience any difficulty in navigating the portals or using the tools available, contact the Registry Help Desk at (309) 557-1818. Specialists are available Monday-Friday from 8:00am-4:00pm. You can also [email us](#) or visit the [Registry Help Center](#) to submit a trouble ticket. Check out our [YouTube channel](#) for short video tutorials related to accessing and using the resources on this site.

**MY REGISTRY**  
Keep your Registry Membership and related records up to date, as well as apply for Gateways programs!

**DIRECTOR**  
Access information needed for DCFS, ExceleRate, and more.

If you do not see the DIRECTOR card, you will need to request/renew access.

### STEP 2: VERIFY STAFF AND CLASSROOMS

Staff will need to be assigned to an existing classroom. All programs will need to have a classroom set up before applying and requesting funding. If you have any changes that need to be made to your staff or classrooms, make those first!

### STEP 3: COMPLETE THE SMART START WORKFORCE GRANTS APPLICATION

Go back to the main Director Portal and click the “Smart Start Workforce Grants Application” card.

**Director Portal**

You are now viewing the portal for the following organization: Test Child Care Center (836124) [Change](#)

**Staff**  
Keep track of staff for your organization

**Reports**  
Access reports including Registry Membership Status and Staff Training Record.

**Program Profile**  
Allows Directors to report their CCAP/CCMS/CCTS IDs

**CCRG Application**  
Access the Child Care Restoration Grant (CCRG) Application

**CCWB Application**  
Access the Child Care Workforce Bonus (CCWB) Application

**Classrooms**  
Classrooms

**SGCC Application**  
Access the Strengthen and Grow Child Care Grant (SGCC) Application

**Smart Start Transition Grants Application**  
Access the Smart Start Transition Grants (SSTG) Application

**Smart Start Workforce Grants Application**  
Access the Smart Start Workforce Grants Application

Click the “Create Application” button.

**Smart Start Workforce Grant Application**

**Application History**

Application ID	Grant Type	Application Submitted	Status	Actions
No Previous Applications				

Click the “Create Application” button below to create a new application.

[Create Application](#)

Once you click “Create Application”, one of the following screens will appear, depending on whether you have completed the FY27 Smart Start Workforce Grants Orientation:

- **You will not be able to access and complete the application until the required orientation is complete.** If you have not yet completed the required orientation or if you have taken the incorrect orientation for your program-type, the yellow message will appear.

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**Smart Start Workforce Grant Application**

As part of our commitment to ensuring all applicants are fully prepared, we continue to require the orientation for the FY27 grant cycle. All programs must take the updated FY27 orientation. There is an orientation for centers and another for family child care, both of which are available in English and Spanish.

You can complete the orientation in two ways:

- **In-person or Virtual (Live)** - Through your CCR&R (Child Care Resource & Referral) local expert, available starting in March 2026. Contact your **Local Expert** for scheduled dates.
- **Virtually (Self-paced Only)** - Through **i-Learning** starting in late March 2026.

**Orientation Incomplete**  
You have not completed the required FY27 orientation.

Please complete the orientation in person or **online through i-Learning**. You will not be able to continue to the application until the orientation is complete. If completing the orientation online, please wait 24 hours for your completion to be recorded and then you should be able to move forward. The orientation you need to complete is for: **Family/Group Family Child Care**

- If you have already completed the FY27 Orientation, the green message will appear and you will be prompted to click the “Create Application” to move forward.

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**Thank You!**  
You have completed the required FY27 orientation. Click the button below to continue to the application

[Create Application](#)

Once you’ve clicked “**Create Application**”, follow the steps below:

Under **Program Details**, check the “Program Name” and “Address” to be sure that you are applying under the correct program.

All gray fields are preexisting and cannot be modified. Fields in “blue boxes”, shown below, need to be entered.

*\*If you have been unable to obtain a Unique Entity ID (UEI), it is okay to leave this blank, but INCCRRA must receive it from you before the documentation deadline.*

The **email address** provided will be used for all Smart Start Workforce Grant communication.

**Smart Start Workforce Grant Application**

**Program Details**

First Name: Vicki, Last Name: [Gray], Gateways Registry ID: [Gray]

Email Address: [Blue Box], Phone Number: [Blue Box]

Role: [Blue Box] (- Select One -), CCAP Provider ID: [Blue Box]

Program Name: [Gray]

Street Address: [Gray]

City: Bloomington, State: Illinois, Zip: 61704

DCFS License Number: [Gray], Unique Entity ID (UEI): [Blue Box], Is your program full-time or part-time?: [Blue Box] (- Select One -)

Under **Child Care Subsidies**, check all boxes that your program receives funding from.

Under **Payment Details**, enter the required information for this section. Be sure that the first 4 items on this page match what is filed with the IRS and what you have listed on your W-9! **This step is very important.**

Enter the mailing address – this is where the check will be sent.

**Child Care Subsidies**

Does your program receive payment from any of the following sources to care for children? (Check all that apply.)

- Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) through the local Child Care Resource & Referral Agency (CCR&R)
- DCFS Foster Care Child Care Payments
- Federal Subsidy for Military Children
- Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) Site Administered Program
- Department of Family Support Services (DFSS) City of Chicago Site Administered Program
- Family Child Care Network for subsidies
- My program does not receive funding from any of these sources

**Payment Details**

Check Payable To: [Gray]

Taxpayer Identification Number Type: [Blue Box] (- Select One -), Taxpayer Identification Number: [Blue Box]

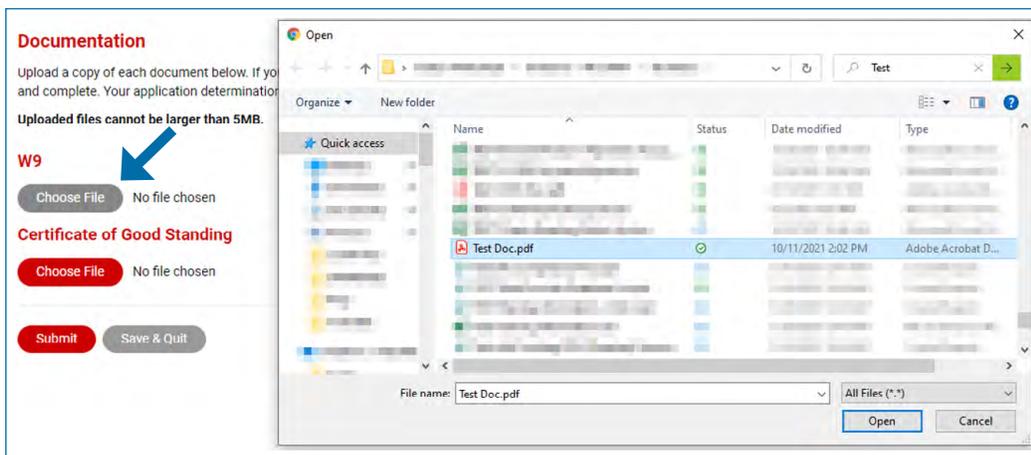
Line 3 of W-9: [Blue Box] (- Select One -)

Mailing Address Line 1: 1226 Towanda Ave

Mailing Address Line 2: [Gray]

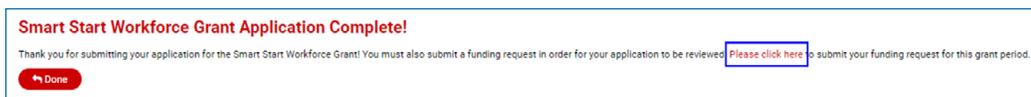
City: Bloomington, State: Illinois, Zip: 61701-3424

Under **Documentation**, click the “Choose File” button and find where you saved the document or picture on your computer. Double click on the file to add it to the application.

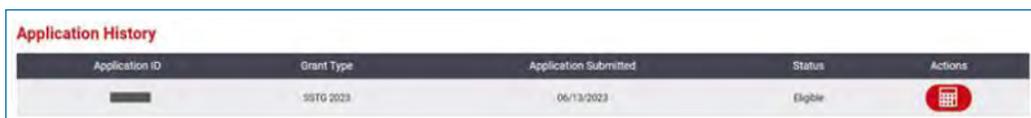


If you need to do more work, click “Save & Quit” to come back later; otherwise, click the “Submit” button.

**Please take note** – there is an additional step you must take before submitting your application! Click the link in the confirmation message to move to the next step and submit a funding request.

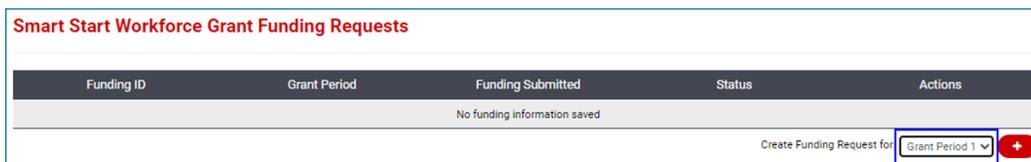


You can also submit a funding request by clicking the calculator icon next to your Application History screen.



## STEP 4: SUBMIT FUNDING REQUEST

Select the grant period you are submitting your request for and click the “+” icon.



Next, check eligible classrooms.

- Review the classrooms listed. If incorrect, go back to the ‘Classroom’ card and revise.
- Select the reason for a waiver if a classroom falls below the enrollment minimum.
- Review the maximum dollar amount listed. This is the maximum funding you may be eligible to receive for the grant period.

### There are 3 new columns:

1. Number of Staff: There should always be 1 or more staff listed here.
2. Missing Hourly Wage: This should always be 0.
3. As of date: This date is from the "Classroom Card." This must be within 30 days of when you submit your funding request.

If none of the criteria matches when trying to submit the "Funding Request," then a red message displays on the top and the submit button will be disabled. You can select "Save & Quit" to make the required changes under the "Classroom" Card. To fix these errors, please click on the "Classroom" Card and update your classroom information.

#### Smart Start Workforce Grant Funding Request

Request For: Grant Period 2

#### Eligible Classrooms

Funding is based on classrooms that are currently open, full-day/full-year, and are not funded by the Early Childhood Block Grant (ECBG) (including Preschool for All and Prevention Initiative) or Head Start/Early Head Start. These are the classrooms you have listed that meet the eligibility criteria. If this is not correct, please close this window (without saving it) and go to the Classrooms section of the Director Portal to make updates as needed.

One or more of your classrooms must be corrected before you can submit this funding request. Be sure that each classroom listed has 1 or more staff, there are 0 staff with missing wages, and that the As Of Date is within the last 30 days. These corrections can all be made on the Classrooms card in the Director Portal.

Name	Age Group	Enrollment	Reason for Waiver	Number of Staff	Missing Hourly Wage	As Of Date
Littlest Ones (Infant)	Infants	6	Not Applicable	0	0	07/02/2024
Toddle About	Toddlers	8	Not Applicable	2	0	09/30/2024
Twos and Young Threes	Two Year Olds	12	Not Applicable	2	1	09/30/2024
Dragonfly (Preschool w Low Enroll)	Preschool	7	Select One	1	0	09/30/2024
Ladybug (Preschool)	Preschool	13	Not Applicable	2	1	09/30/2024

### What changes are needed if you receive a red message in the "Eligible Classrooms" screen:

1. **If Number of Staff is Zero:** Classrooms must have staff assigned. Go the "Classrooms Card" and add staff in the classroom that does not have assigned staff. Then, update the "As of Date" under the "Classroom Card" after changes are made. Click on "Submit" button.
2. **Missing Hourly Wage:** Staff must have an hourly wage. If any number other than 0 appears in this column, it means the Hourly Wage is missing within the Classrooms Card. If so, first select the "Update Classroom" page, and then go to "Classroom Staff." Please add the correct "Hourly Wages" and then update the "As of Date" under Classrooms Card after changes are made. Click on "Submit" button.
3. **As Of Date:** The "As Of Date" must be within 30 days of your funding request date. If no changes are needed under the "Classrooms Card" then enter "Current Date" and click on "Submit" button.

Next, complete the remaining information.

- Review the "Use of Funds" statements.
- Enter your name and today's date to state your agreement with the Use of Funds.
- Upload the required documents.

#### Use of Funds

By entering my name and date below, I am stating my understanding of the following:

- I understand that either my:
  1. Center program will be required to pay teachers and teacher assistants in grant funded classrooms at least the required wage floor starting October 1, 2024 – December 31, 2024.
  2. Family Child Care or Family Group Child Care program will be required to pay assistants at least the required wage floor starting October 1, 2024 – December 31, 2024.
- I understand that my program will be required to provide payroll documentation quarterly to show proof of paying at least the wage floor to required positions.
- I understand that my program will be audited for funds expensed during the grant year and may be required to provide additional documentation to show proof of number of grant funded classrooms, classroom enrollment, and that the program met at least the wage floor requirement for required staff.

Name  Date

#### Certifications and Requirements / Attestation

Choose File No file chosen

#### Classroom Rosters

Choose File No file chosen

Submit Save & Quit

- Click "Submit" to submit your application for review.

## What to expect next:

- Applications will be reviewed
- INCCRRA will email you to let you know:
  - If your application is incomplete or clearer documentation needs to be uploaded.
  - If you need to submit clearer documentation, you will be allowed time to submit additional documentation.
  - If your application is found eligible or ineligible.
  - When your grant payment check has been mailed.
- Grant reports will be due on the "last day of the month following the funding period. For example, Round 1 (FY26) funding is July - September 2025, so reporting will be due October 31, 2025.

## STEP 5: CHECK THE STATUS OF YOUR SMART START WORKFORCE GRANT APPLICATION AND FUNDING REQUEST

Click the Smart Start Workforce Grants Application card in the Director Portal to access the Application History.

- The status column shows the status of your main application.
- To see the status of your funding requests, click the calculator button.

Application ID	Grant Type	Application Submitted	Status	Actions
14680	SSWG FY25	05/31/2024	Pending (Awaiting Review)	

Funding ID	Grant Period	Funding Submitted	Status	Actions
10060	Grant Period 1	06/18/2024	Submitted	

- The 'Status' column on the 'Funding Requests' listing shows the status of each funding request.

Below, you will find status meanings for the **Funding Request**:

- **Draft** – You have saved your funding request, but still need to finish it and click "Submit."
- **Submitted** – You have submitted the funding request, and it is in the queue to be reviewed.
- **Information Required** – The funding request has been reviewed and additional information is needed (check your email for details).
- **Accepted** – The funding request has been accepted and is in the queue for funding.
- **Rejected** – The funding request was reviewed and could not be approved (check your email for details).

Below, you will find **Application Status** meanings:

- **Pending (Online Submission)** – You have saved your application but still need to finish it and click submit.
- **Pending (Awaiting Review)** – You have submitted your application, and it is in the queue to be reviewed.
- **Pending (Information Required)** – Your application is being reviewed and requires some information from you (please check your email for details).
- **Eligible** – Your application is approved, and you will receive payment.
- **Eligible (Waitlist)** – Your application meets eligibility criteria and has been placed on a waitlist for approval based on the availability of funding.
- **Ineligible** – Your program does not meet program eligibility requirements (e.g., not a full-time program, does not meet CCAP requirement, etc.) or did not submit required information within the deadline.