



Request for Application

for

Family Advocacy Subgrant and Community of Practice

Application Submission Deadline

**Proposals must be submitted to FamilyAdvocacyRFA@usa.childcareaware.org
by **5:00 p.m. EST on Friday, July 10, 2026**
Applications received after the deadline will be disqualified**

REQUEST FOR Application (RFA)

I. Background

Child Care Aware[®] of America (CCAoA) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit, membership organization representing over 450 Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) organizations across the country and is our nation's leading voice for child care. CCAoA's mission is "To advance a child care system that effectively serves all children and families." CCAoA pursues its mission by working with a national network of CCR&R organizations and diverse members and partners. CCAoA has been working for over 30 years to promote policies and partnerships to ensure that all families in the United States have access to quality child care settings that are safe, healthy, affordable, and promote early and extended learning in the first years and in and out of school time.

CCAoA has worked for over 10 years with Vroom[®], a global program to support the goal of sharing the science of early brain development in creative ways so all children have the chance to become thriving adults. Currently, CCAoA has successfully utilized and supported the implementation of Vroom in CCR&R organizations across the nation, bringing the science of early brain development and executive function-based skills to families and child care through everyday moments.

II. Project Goal

Effective policy change begins with strong, community-led advocacy. This project is designed to support community-based child care partners to empower families as active, effective advocates positioned to deliver compelling messages that can drive policy action among decisionmakers by utilizing Vroom as a tool to drive narrative change and engage families as child care advocates, Vroom provides science-based tips and tools to turn everyday moments into Brain Building Moments[™]. Vroom's free suite of content and materials empowers families to play a proactive role in their children's early brain development. Vroom meets families and caregivers where they are, through people they trust, and places they go, including community-based organizations.

Through this project, selected partner organizations will build and support a ladder of engagement and advocacy for families in their communities to amplify family voices, while integrating Vroom as a tool for narrative change. The "rungs" on the ladder of engagement and advocacy will be determined by selected partner organizations in their project proposals and should be based on the unique context and policy priorities of the partner organization. CCAoA expects each rung of the ladder to increase the level of advocate engagement and/or action with later rungs characterized by deeper levels of personalization and/or more time-intensive advocate engagements.

As an example, early steps in the ladder of engagement might involve simple actions, such as sending a digital message to a legislator. As advocates become more involved, they may participate in activities like attending events or meetings with lawmakers. At the highest level of engagement, advocates might begin organizing and leading advocacy initiatives or speaking at community events.

Project proposals should integrate Vroom based on the unique context and policy priorities of the partner organization. For example, projects could include using Vroom to recruit family advocates and/or equipping parents with information and comfort in talking about the importance of brain science.

CCAoA aspires to increase the number of family advocates in each selected partner community; create, strengthen, and deepen relationships between community-based child care partners and families in their communities; and increase interest and action in child care related issues from decision makers through this project. To this end, partner organizations will all be expected to meet the following set of goals:

After participation in project activities:

- 100 family advocates engage in advocacy efforts through the proposed project
- 100 family advocates self-identify as advocates by the conclusion of the project
- 20 family advocates report they have an increased/deepened/strengthened relationship with the partner organization
- Partner organizations will provide at least three types of advocacy activities with at least 10 parents participating in each
- Partner organizations will connect family advocates with at least five decision-makers

Organizations may add additional goals in alignment with their individual projects, but at a minimum must include activities to drive achievement of the goals listed above.

Organizations may partner with another qualified organization to apply. Only one application is needed, and a primary applicant must be identified in the application. CCAoA expects the primary applicant to be the leader of the project, including but not limited to the contract designee, recipient of funds, implementer of activities, and owner of relationships with family advocates. This project is not intended to support pass-through funding.

III. Available Funds

CCAoA plans to award subgrants with the amount of \$25,000 per awardee to implement their proposed projects.

IV. Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible for award, CCR&R agency applicants must:

- Have a 501(c)(3); 509(a)(1); 509(a)(2); or 509(a)(3) tax-exempt status with the IRS. If subgrantee is described in 509(a)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, subgrantee is further classified as a Type 1 or Type 2 supporting organization.
- Applicants should be community-based child care organizations, including but not limited to CCR&Rs, that have demonstrated experience doing advocacy work
- Not have participated in the first round of this subgrant and Community of Practice
- **Membership is not required, but members of CCAoA will be given priority for this grant.** In order to check membership status, renew membership, or join prior to submission, please contact CCAoA's membership team at info@usa.childcareaware.org.

V. Project Commitments and Required Tasks

The selected organizations will work closely with the CCAoA Policy and Professional Development Teams for the duration of the project. Selected applicants will:

- Participate in up to ten (10) virtual work sessions through a Community of Practice (CoP).

- Participate in data collection to evaluate the results of the strategies implemented throughout the course of the COP.
- Participate in monthly individual technical assistance (TA) meetings with a CCAoA staff member.
- Designate and ensure that one (1) subgrantee staff member will attend CCAoA's May 2027 Symposium.
- Ensure and coordinate that five (5) parents/guardians will attend CCAoA's May 2027 Symposium.* Coordinating and ensuring the attendance of five (5) parents/guardians of young children who participate in the proposed project at CCAoA's Symposium is a required project commitment. However, applicants should not include this responsibility in their proposed activities or budget for associated travel costs. CCAoA will fund participation for five (5) parents/guardians of young children and one staff member from the organization for Symposium 2027 and Advocacy Day and will work directly with selected organizations to finalize participation details.

The project is expected to begin on August 7, 2026, and must be completed by March 31, 2027. Reporting responsibilities and coordination for Symposium presentations will continue through May 15, 2027.

VI. Ineligible Activities

To remain compliant with grant requirements, the following activities are not eligible for funding:

- Any activity to carry on propaganda or otherwise to attempt to influence legislation; or
- Any activity to influence the outcome of any specific public election or to carry on, directly or indirectly, any voter registration drive.

VII. Project Timeline

It is anticipated that the work on the project will commence August 7, 2026, and must be completed by March 31, 2027. Reporting responsibilities and coordination for Symposium presentations will continue through May 15, 2027.

VIII. CCAoA Support

The CCAoA Policy and Professional Development Teams will provide the following:

- CCAoA will provide support and guidance throughout the project. Grantees will receive monthly individualized technical support towards project completion including, but not limited to engaging families in advocacy, supports on using Vroom with families, support with programming details, feedback on current programmatic efforts, and support navigating any unforeseen challenges in project completion.

IX. Requirements for Application

Proposed Use of Funds (Please answer questions 1 through 5 below)

1) Proposed Use of Funds—Proposed Project

Please include a description of activities that these funds would support. This description should include:

- Your proposal of activities to create and implement a ladder of engagement and advocacy for families in your community.
- How your project will impact your community, with a focus on how it will address the needs of communities that are often overlooked and/or underserved in both project design and evaluation (i.e. rural communities).
- How your organization will utilize Vroom as a tool to empower and engage families as active, effective advocates positioned to deliver compelling messages that can drive policy action among decisionmakers.

N.B. – While attending and coordinating five advocates to participate in Symposium and Advocacy Day is a required commitment of the project, it should not be included as a part of the proposed activities, nor should it serve as a goal of the project. Participation in Symposium and Advocacy Day should be considered another opportunity for advocate growth and development, but it should not be the focus or culmination of the proposed project.

2) Proposed Use of Funds—Project Impact

Please include a detailed description of the anticipated impact of this project, including how effectiveness will be measured. Responses should detail how projects will meet the required goals stated above, as well as any additional impacts anticipated for the organization, family advocates, and/or community (e.g., the evolution and/or development of relationships with family advocates and your organization, connections between family advocates and decisionmakers).

3) Proposed Use of Funds—Project Timeline

Please include your proposed project Timeline. Awarded Projects must commence by August 7, 2026. All work under the contract must be completed by March 31, 2027. Reporting responsibilities and coordination for Symposium presentations will continue through May 15, 2027.

4) Proposed Use of Funds—Project Budget

CCAOA anticipates awarding subgrants of \$25,000 per awardee to implement their proposed projects. Please include a description of how the requested funding amount will support your activities and a short, suggested budget for these funds. Including funding for parent compensation for those that participate in the project is encouraged.

Funding related to attendance at Symposium and Advocacy Day should not be included in the proposed budget.

5) Proposed Use of Funds—Additional Information

Please include any additional information we should know about your interest in the project.

X. Selection Criteria

Applicants will be selected solely by the judgment of Child Care Aware[®] of America. Selection criteria may include geography, organization type, and the political and policy climate of the applicant's state.

XI. Submission Process and Application Timeline

Application Due Date:



Applications must be submitted to FamilyAdvocacyRFA@usa.childcareaware.org by **5:00 p.m. ET on Friday, July 10, 2026**. Applications received after the deadline will not be considered. Responses emailed but not received at the designated email address by the specified time and date will not be considered as meeting the submission requirement and therefore will be deemed “non-responsive” and will not be evaluated or considered for award.

Questions and Answers:

All questions should be submitted to FamilyAdvocacyRFA@usa.childcareaware.org. Questions must be submitted no later than Wednesday, June 10, 2026, at 12:00 p.m. ET. Questions submitted after this deadline will not be answered.

Notification of Award: CCAoA anticipates notifying applicants of their status by **Monday, July 20, 2026**.

Project Start Date: This project is anticipated to commence the week of **August 7, 2026**.

Child Care Aware® of America is not responsible for any costs incurred by you in the preparation of response to this RFA. The preparation of your proposal shall be made without obligation by Child Care Aware® of America to accept any of the items included in the application or to discuss the reasons why the application is accepted or not accepted.