



**First Children's Finance**  
**Dream Up! Grant Summary**  
**Driftless Development**  
Crawford County, WI

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## Strategic Supply Planning

The Strategic Child Care Supply Planning Process is a facilitated community planning process designed to engage a Core Team of community leaders to support and expand the child care capacity in their community. First Children’s Finance works with the Core Team to understand the current child care landscape and create goals to address child care needs.

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# Background

## Driftless Development – Crawford County, WI

Driftless Development’s Core Team was selected to engage in community consultation regarding the supply of child care, through the Dream Up! Child Care Strategic Supply Planning Process. Funding for this work is provided by a *Preschool Development Grant (PDG)* received by the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families. In this process, a Core Team lead by Carol Roth, Executive Director at Driftless Development, participated in a process that included:



- 8 hours of facilitated meetings by First Children’s Finance National Team Staff
- Identification of goals to increase high-quality child-care slots
- Planning support, facilitation, and technical assistance from First Children’s Finance
- A Strategic Child Care Supply Plan that guides the Driftless Development Core Team in efforts to increase its supply of high-quality child care.

# Community Information

Figure 1: Driftless Development Defined Zip Codes | Community Application Process

Cities	Zip Codes	Cities	Zip Codes
Boscobel	53805	Eastman	54626
Prairie Du Chien	53821	Ferryville	54628
Waukeza	53826	Seneca (Gay Mills)	54631
De Soto	54624	Soldiers Grove	54655

Driftless Development is based in Crawford County, Wisconsin. The county is located in a beautiful, rural area filled with bluffs and rivers. Located in the Southern Region of Wisconsin. They applied for the Dream Up! Strategic Supply Planning Process and were awarded participation with the Fall Dream Up! Strategic Supply Plan Cohort. Each application included a geographic region the Core Team planned to focus on, referred to as ‘the community’. Driftless Development’s Core Team included the zip codes and corresponding communities listed in Figure 1 as their geographic region and defined community. This geographic region has approximately 16,075 residents and is the focus of this Strategic Supply Plan.

## Core Team

The following people participated in the Core Team meetings to address the child care supply needs in Driftless Developments defined community. The primary contact for this project is Core Team Lead, Carol Roth, Executive Director at Driftless Development.

Name	Organization Affiliation
<b>CORE TEAM LEAD:</b> Carol Roth	Executive Director   Driftless Development
<b>CORE TEAM MEMBERS:</b>	
Pam Ritchie	CEO   Opportunity Center
Chad Abram	City Administrator   Prairie du Chien
Andy Banasik	District Administrator   Prairie du Chien School District
Mari Beth Valley	WEESNN Lead Program Coach   WECA
Samantha Donahue	Chief HR Officer   Crossing Rivers Health
Paula Reif	Intergenerational Programming Consultant
Jim Hackett	Parent   Director Emergency Management   Crawford County
Amanda Grisworld	Human Development and Relationship Educator   University of Wisconsin Extension
Olivia Dudenboestel	Childcare Provider   Teacher
Traci Konichek	Parent of Special Needs Child
Brita Prew	Human Resources Manager   Truvariant
Paul Chappelle	Plant Manager   3M
Eowyn Earle	Youth Representative   Worked in Childcare
Laura Stuckey	Principal   BA Kenedy Elementary   Prairie du Chien School District
Kari Kossman	Assistant Executive Director   Opportunity Center
Tomi Gebhard	Elementary School Principal   Bluff View, Prairie du Chien School District
Jared Hickey	Business Child Care Advocate   The Parenting Place
Carla Sumner	Bureau of Regional Operations
Jean Zawacki	Bureau of Regional Operations

## Community Insights

Research by the Core Team was conducted and provided as part of the application process. First Children's Finance provided research and statistics regarding child care needs and sustainable child care solutions. During Strategic Supply Plan meetings, this data was reviewed with the Core Team to better understand their community's child care challenges.

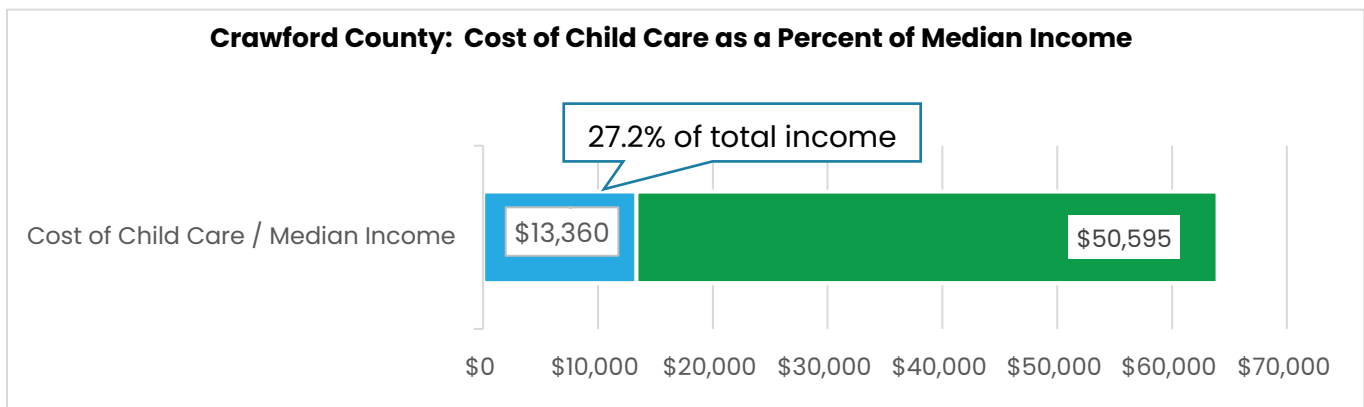
Crawford County provided demographic data in their initial application that highlighted the community's need for available, affordable child care solutions.

The reported demographics included:

- 1.) Currently there are only enough slots for one-third of the children under 5 years of age.
- 2.) The need for infant care and non-traditional hours has not been addressed within the community.
- 3.) Affordability is an issue at the average monthly price for care is \$1130/month.
- 4.) The median household income is \$50,595, which is significantly less than the state average of \$61,747.

\*Excerpt from Dream Up! Application

Figure 2: Crawford County Average Cost of Infant Care and Median Income | Wisconsin PDG Sandbox Data | Community Application



During the Strategic Supply Planning process, First Children's Finance shared with the Core Team the data regarding the average cost of child care in Crawford County compared to the 'true cost of care'. True cost of care is defined as the dollar value of all resources used to provide high-quality early childhood care and education. True cost is not just what a provider charges a family or receives in the state child care subsidy; rather, it is what it costs to provide high-quality early learning experiences and the value of personnel and non-personnel resources used to manage a program. Figure 2 shows that the average annual cost of infant care in Crawford County is \$13,360; this is just over half of what has been designated as the 'true cost of care' at \$1,800 per month. Families simply cannot afford the true cost of care, causing providers make difficult decisions about investing in staff wages and quality investments in their programs.

## Supply Demand Gap Analysis

As part of the Strategic Supply Planning Process, the Core Team was provided with information to help them understand factors that contribute to child care challenges. First Children’s Finance leveraged different data sources to create an illustrative picture of the demand for child care in the community (see Figure 3). These data sources include U.S. Census Bureau, Wisconsin’s Department of Children and Families Data, and First Children’s Finance research and data.

The Supply Demand Gap Analysis completed by First Children’s Finance for Driftless Development dated August 2022, shows a deficit of 393 slots for children birth to 5 living in households where all available parents are in the workforce. As a result, First Children’s Finance found capacity of licensed and regulated full day year-round care at only 181 slots. Results showed multiple zip codes within the defined community with zero child care slots available.

Figure 3: Driftless Development Supply Demand Gap Analysis | First Children’s Finance Analysis

Zip Code	City	Licensed Family Child Care	Licensed Group Child Care Center	Certified Child Care	Expected Child Care Capacity	Expected Number of Children Under Age 5	Expected Child Care Need
53805	Boscobel	1	1	0	62	161	99
53821	Prairie Du Chien	3	2	0	97	154	57
53826	Waukeza	0	1	0	22	53	31
54624	De Soto	0	0	0	0	34	34
54626	Eastman	0	0	0	0	86	86
54628	Ferryville	0	0	0	0	13	13
54631	Gay Mills	0	0	0	0	23	23
54655	Soldiers Grove	0	0	0	0	50	50
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>574</b>	<b>393</b>



## How Is the Need Supported Today?

When there is a gap in the licensed and regulated child care slots available in a community compared to the children potentially needing care in the community, families find unique ways to meet their needs outside of licensed or regulated child care. The following are common ways that parents may fill their need for child care and may be present in Crawford County.

### **Legal Unlicensed (unregistered) Care / Family, Friends, & Neighbors**

Friends, family, and neighbors may provide care for up to three (3) children without a license; however, under Wisconsin law, no person may provide care and supervision for four (4) or more children under the age of seven (7) for less than 24 hours a day. Care for four (4) or more children under the age of seven (7) would require a provider to obtain a license to operate a child care center from Wisconsin's Department of Children and Families.

### **Illegal Unlicensed/Unregistered Care**

Child care is provided in a setting that requires licensing or regulation, but the provider has chosen to provide care without the proper license or following regulatory guidelines.

### **Under-Employment / Shift Alignment**

Parents may work split shifts, work part-time, or limit their work hours to stay home with their children. There may be children in the community whose parents have left the workforce and are not looking for employment because of child care challenges. These families are not included in the data in this report, but parents may enter the workforce if viable child care options were available.

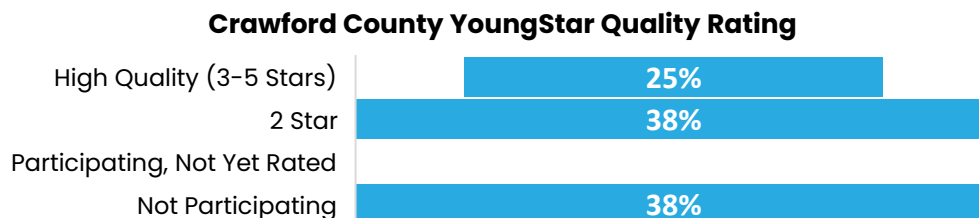
### **Out of Area Care**

Parents with children in the region studied may take their child to care outside of this report's area. This may be due to parents' work location, access to care, or other reasons.

## Quality Rating and Improvement System Overview

First Children's Finance examined state-wide information about the number of child care programs that are participating in the YoungStar Program (see Figure 4). YoungStar is Wisconsin's child care Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) that identifies programs that go above and beyond the general licensing requirements to obtain higher quality in their child care program.

Figure 4: Crawford County YoungStar Rating | PDG Sandbox



# Workforce

## Child Care Workforce

First Children’s Finance examined the child care workforce in Wisconsin. Many individuals in the workforce have formal educational backgrounds and more than a decade of experience. However, more than half of early childhood educators rely on some form of public assistance and do not receive benefits. The Institute for Research on Poverty at the University of Wisconsin–Madison reported a 40% turnover rate in the Early Childhood Education field. Figure 5 shows data collected for the Southern Region of Wisconsin and shows 24.1% of the workforce anticipates leaving the field within the next two years. The cost of care is high for families, and the cost of delivery is high for providers. Often, the impact is reflected in child care worker wages. The First Five Years Fund researched the average compensation rate for child care workers and found in Wisconsin; the average hourly rate is \$10.66. The annual salary of \$22,170.00 is below the poverty line for a working family.



### Early Education Workforce Survey

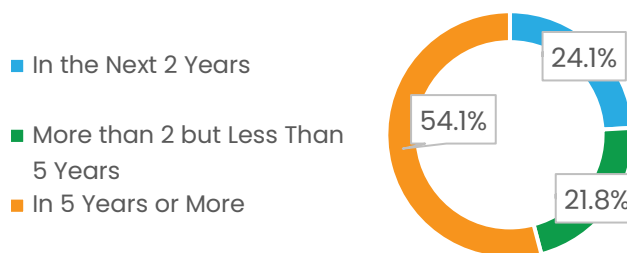


Figure 5: Survey of Center-Based Teachers | Institute for Research and Poverty

## Primary Industries

Additionally, First Children’s Finance examined the top industries in Crawford County using available census data. The top industries (see Figure 6) can impact child care needs based on when shift workers are needed, as well as beginning and end time of employee shifts. In this community, two of the top industries are manufacturing and health care. Often, these industries call for second and third shift employees. Without sustainable child care options during these shifts, hiring new employees and retaining current employees in fields such as manufacturing can quickly become a challenge.

During Strategic Supply Plan meetings with First Children’s Finance, the Core Team was asked to brainstorm ways to address the need of child care for all types of working families within their community.



Figure 6: Top Industries in Crawford County | U.S. CENSUS 2021

## Data Overview

<b>0</b> Certified Family Child Care programs (*DCF Licensing Information)	<b>4</b> Licensed Family Child Care programs (*DCF Licensing Information)
<b>4</b> Licensed Group Child Care programs (*DCF Licensing Information)	<b>25%</b> of providers have a 3–5 Star Rating (DCF Sandbox Data)
<b>44%</b> of zip codes are considered child care deserts (DCF Sandbox Data)	<b>574</b> children under 5 with all parents in the workforce (*ACS 5 Year Estimates)
<b>181</b> *current expected child care capacity (*FCF Calculation May 2022)	<b>393</b> birth to age 5 slots needed (*FCF Calculation)
<b>\$1,113</b> average monthly cost of care (DCF Sandbox Data)	<b>16,075</b> Driftless Development defined zip code population

## Core Team Planning Meeting

Throughout the winter of 2023, the Core Team, a group of community stakeholders interested in the supply and sustainability of child care met to discuss the child care shortage in Crawford County and to develop strategies to increase the number of high-quality child care slots. Below are the primary topics addressed in the conversations and the goals developed to address the child care shortage.

Access to Care

Workforce

Community Awareness

After discussing these core topics, the focus was placed on primary areas of need, where current resources should be directed, and where additional resources are needed. The Core Team created the following goals to support the child care needs in the community.



## Goals



### **SMART Goal:**

The Core Team will develop outreach strategies to support current child care providers and increase the number of licensed family child care providers by 3, which will add 24 new child care slots.

**Project Team Members:** Pam Ritchie, Carol Roth, Tomi Gebhard, Amanda Griswold, Brita Prew, Traci Konicek, Mari Beth Valley, Paul Chappelle, Kelly Matthews

#### **Goal Outcomes:**

- Offer one informational meeting and three training meetings for 20 current and potential child care providers
- Complete and distribute two child care videos (1 for a student audience and 1 for an adult audience)
- Develop a Child Care Facebook page
- Connect with at least 3 current providers to help them with supplies that would help them develop more available child care slots.
- Develop a Child Care Booth / Display to be used at local career fairs, school events (e.g. 3K or 4K sign up)
- Print and Distribute 1000 Child Care Fact Sheets and Age/Stage Handouts



### **SMART Goal:**

The Core Team will complete a feasibility study for future planning and funding for a child care center to be developed at the Career and Technical Education (CTE) Center by October 2023.

**Project Team Members:** Carol Roth

#### **Goal Outcomes:**

A feasibility study is essential for future planning and funding for the child care center to be developed.

## Project Recommendations

Crawford County, Wisconsin is a rural area with a long history of community partnership in bringing needed services to the area. Driftless Development, located in Crawford County of Wisconsin has a committed Core Team of individuals that are invested in the child care landscape of their community. First Children's Finance recommends that the Core Team engage in the following activities:

1

Continue to engage the community in this project – many hands make light work.

As noted in the application and throughout the Strategic Supply Plan Process, Driftless Development's Core Team has established partnerships with excellent regional resources and local businesses. Continue to bring awareness to the broader community regarding the ongoing child care shortage by sharing how local businesses can support and advocate for the child care industry. Local investment and engagement can lead to an increase the child care workforce, sustainability of programs and an increased workforce for the greater community. As in any community project Core Team members may change as businesses priorities re-align and new programs are developed. Broad community engagement will help to keep the projects and the goals moving forward to increase the supply and sustainability of child care.

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2

Always run financials before committing to a project – look for a broad base of support.

As new and expansion child care projects are discussed run financials and feasibility reports specific to child care programming. Having an accurate understanding of slots needed, enrollment potential, staffing needs and tuition rates are required to create sustainability in the current child care climate.

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3

Continue to involve existing providers – they are part of the solution.

Ongoing support to all types of existing child care in the area should be prioritized to retain the existing providers. Solicit the feedback of current providers. Efforts should be made to ensure current child care providers continue to feel supported and have access to resources they need to stay in the field. Use this information to support and attract members of the community to begin the process of certification or registration.

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