

EAGLE RIVER VALLEY CHILDCARE AVON EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS: EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION PROVIDER/OPERATOR

Request for Proposal to Provide Early Care and Education Services

Eagle River Valley Childcare (“ERV”) is requesting proposals from interested providers to consult on the final design of and to manage and operate early care and education services at a newly built facility in Avon, Colorado.

This proposal request is intended to provide an opportunity for interested individuals and organizations to share information about their early care and education philosophy, approach and operational plan.

Responses to this Request for Proposals shall be submitted to the Eagle River Valley Childcare by email to sfranke@vfv.org, by **November 15, 2024**, at 5:00pm. Any questions prior to submission can be sent to Sarah Franke at sfranke@vfv.org. Follow-up interviews will be scheduled for the mornings of Wednesday, November 20, 2024, and Thursday, November 21, 2024. Final selection and contracting will occur by late November 2024. Please note that while we ask that you craft your submissions per our outline below, we are open to engaging with you should you have questions or alternatives you wish to present during the interview process.

Introduction

There is not a single town in Eagle County that has enough licensed early care and education slots to serve its total population under the age of five. For example, the Town of Avon has a total licensing capacity of 342 slots but an estimated 666 children under the age of five in need of care. These disparities add up to a countywide shortfall of roughly a thousand licensed care slots. Infants and toddler slots are in particularly short supply, making up just 29% of the county’s total licensed slots. 100 families are currently on Eagle County’s Early Head Start waitlist, and due to our area’s high cost of living, many more families are struggling financially but earn too much to qualify.

Due to this growing issue, the Vail Valley Foundation has established a new nonprofit arm, Eagle River Valley Childcare, and, as the entity’s first initiative, has partnered with the Town of Avon to build a licensed Early Care and Education Center in Avon, Colorado. The Avon Early Care and Education Center will bring approximately 165 urgently needed early care and education openings to serve families in Avon, Edwards, Minturn, Red Cliff, and Vail. The 13,500 square ft. educational center will provide high-quality early care, learning and development for infants and children through five years of age with at least a ¼, if not a ½, of the spaces available designated for ages 23 months or less, and a lifeline to parents in the Eagle River Valley who cannot find or afford early care and education.

The project entered the bidding process in September 2024. We plan to begin construction in May 2025, complete construction in late summer 2026, and serve families in fall 2026.

The selected contractor will also be engaged prior to the final build-out of the facility and have the opportunity to advise on the appropriate layout for indoor space and outside play areas.

Following our request for proposal process, the selected operator must be willing to enter into a written agreement with ERVC to provide all services required herein. It is the intent of ERVC to enter into a contract with the successful provider for an initial three-year term. The contract will be subject to termination with any breach of terms but otherwise will be eligible for ongoing two-year extension agreements based on a 60-day review period taking place in years two, four, six, etc., of the original contract. At the culmination of the maximum ten years, the service may be open for a competitive bid process.

Project Goals

ERVC seeks to develop a new Early Care and Education Center that:

1. meets the full capacity of enrollment potential by ensuring the initial and ongoing employment of a qualified and professional staff, marketing the facility and recruiting as necessary, and maintaining a high-level of parent/family satisfaction to ensure retention.
2. provides an affordable high-quality year-round early care and education facility that meets the needs of local residents and employees and accommodates a variety of income levels, including families at or below the federal poverty level.
3. provides a nurturing and responsive environment for children’s social-emotional, cognitive, social, and physical development.
4. accommodates the need for additional birth-toddler early care and education availability in the community.
5. operates with a financially sustainable model that is responsible for revenue generation, expense management, and maintaining operating reserves that allow for continued financial stability. A successful operator will have prudent budget management including budget forecasting and planning, tracking and reporting, variance analysis and cash flow management. Revenue management will include enrollment strategies for maintaining and growing enrollment, and pursuing alternative funding such as fundraising initiatives, government grants, and donations, to support the financial stability of the program. Expense control will include cost-effective procurement and managing staffing expense (staffing levels and compensation). Operator will be responsible for compliance and financial reporting including regulatory compliance, audit and financial review, and transparency and accountability.

Scope of Services

The selected operator shall:

Advise ERVC on the final build-out and design of the new Early Care and Education Center, including appropriate layout for indoor space (to include kitchen, administrative area, and restrooms) and outside play areas.

Manage the day-to-day operations of a full-service, high-quality Early Care and Education Center for Eagle River Valley families. Operate the center at least Monday through Friday, from 6:00 am to 6:00 pm, year-round (with the exception of federal holidays). Applicants should include in their proposal, or be prepared to discuss during the interview process, their ability and willingness to provide additional

services for select families which may include extended hours starting at 5:00 am and ending at 8:00 pm and/or early care and education service availability on Saturdays.

Provide flexibility regarding age group mix, maintaining the ratio of teacher/child outlined in the Colorado law and administrative rules governing Early Care and Education Childcare Centers, [Section 7.702 Rules Regulating Child Care Centers \(Less Than 24-Hour Care\) \(hereafter “Early Care and Education Childcare Center Rules”\)](#).

Recruit, hire, and train to assure the program has a qualified staff, including an Executive Director to be hired six months prior to the center’s opening. Ensure all employees are approved and screened in compliance with Early Care and Education Childcare Center Rules and provide education of personnel as required in the Early Care and Education Childcare Center Rules, at operator’s expense.

Provide a developmentally appropriate curriculum for all age groups to include comprehensive activities to promote physical development and health, language and literacy, cognitive development, and social and emotional development in alignment with the [Colorado Early Learning & Development Guidelines](#).

Participate in the [Colorado Shines Quality Rating and Improvement System](#) (QRIS).

Comply fully with Early Care and Education Childcare Center Rules. Implement and practice daily safety procedures in accordance with state Early Care and Education requirements. Develop and implement an emergency plan and safety program in compliance with Early Care and Education Childcare Center Rules that adequately address evacuation of the facility and shelter-in-place procedures. This plan and program will be updated and exercised regularly, no less than twice per year.

Develop policies and procedures for the Early Care and Education Center that meet all licensing requirements and include (but are not limited to) the following:

1. Mission & Philosophy
2. Program Overview
3. Staffing, Staff Policies & Staff Training (including how licensed requirements will be met and documented)
4. Operational Details: including but not limited to calendar/holidays, days/hours of operation, daily schedule and fees
5. Attendance, Check-in and out (including release policy), means to determine at all times who is present at the center, and procedure for closing the center each day.
6. Guidance, Positive Instruction, Supporting Positive Behavior, Discipline and Consequences: including but not limited to how the operator will:
 - a. cultivate positive child, staff and family relationships; create and maintain a socially and emotionally respectful early learning and care environment;
 - b. implement teaching strategies, supporting positive behavior, pro-social peer interaction and overall social and emotional competence in young children;
 - c. provide individualized social and emotional intervention supports for children who need them, including methods for understanding child behavior; and developing adopting and implementing a team-based positive behavior support plan with the intent to reduce challenging behavior and prevent suspensions and expulsions;

- d. access an early childhood mental health consultant or other specialist as needed;
 - e. make decisions and what steps are taken prior to the suspension, expulsion or request to parents or guardians to withdraw a child from care due to concerns about the child's behavioral issues. These procedures must be consistent with the center's policy on guidance, positive instruction, discipline and consequences and include documentation of the steps taken to understand and respond to challenging behavior.
7. Security & Emergency Procedures: to include but not limited to lockdowns, evacuation, threatening weather, protection from vehicular traffic, and building and physical premise safety.
 8. Health & Safety: to include but not limited to hygiene (may want to add diapering/toileting policies here), accidents, allergies, biting, medication storage and administration, immunizations, illnesses, nutrition/food preparation, first aid, emergency preparedness and response planning, prevention of sudden infant death syndrome and shaken baby syndrome, and other precautions and preventative measures.
 9. Other Information: enrichments, birthdays, what to bring to school and what to leave at home, field trips, nap time, confidentiality, etc.
 10. Hot/Cold Weather: when children will be outside, when they won't
 11. Media Policy
 12. Lost Child Policy
 13. Mandatory Reporter Policy
 14. Parent Involvement
 15. Inclusion
 16. Terms & Conditions
 17. Access to Reporting

These policies and procedures must be available to ERVC and interested parties.

Market the Early Care and Education Center and manage overall center enrollment to maximize availability and fill capacity.

Provide all classroom educational materials and consumable supplies, additional equipment, and indoor or outdoor toys to develop and challenge the wide range of children at the center. All purchased supplies and equipment must be from approved vendors that adhere to safety recall expectations

Provide healthy meals and snacks per [Colorado Shines QRIS Indicators](#) and [Early Care and Education Center Rules Section 7.702.55 Food and Nutrition - for meals and snacks](#).

Maintain availability for audit and inspection, records of revenues and expenditures relating to these services shall be maintained by the provider and made available upon request until audits initiated by the County, State, or Federal auditors are completed, or for a period of three years after termination of services, whichever is greater. Abide by all record and reporting requirements indicated by [state licensing rules and regulations](#).

Develop and implement an equipment tagging and inventory system that will permit the ready identification of equipment supplied by the provider, ERVC will maintain inventory for ERVC-supplied items.

Schedule at least quarterly interest meetings, to review the curriculum, policy, and procedures of the center and ask questions. The Director and full-time on-site manager of the Early Care and Education Center must attend the scheduled meetings and be available for additional meetings requested by interested parties.

Employ dual language staff and provide bilingual classroom options. Provide a culturally and linguistically responsive approach, with a detailed plan and procedure outlining how the center and its staff will support this environment.

Ensure that a minimum of 25% of the total spots are reserved for low-income families each year.

ERVC Shall:

Provide Early Care and Education facility and outdoor space and provide maintenance to building exterior elements and snow removal during winter months. ERVC shall further manage long-term Cap Ex Assessments (e.g., for larger items such as roof replacement). Note: Operator will be responsible for maintenance on all interior and playground elements tied to the Early Care and Education Center, as well as water, heat, electricity, and landscaping.

Supply all initial Fixtures, Furnishings and Equipment (FF&E).

Provide up to 50% pre-enrollment through the employer-sponsored model of the facility and manage employer contracts.

Manage a subsidy housing fund for Early Care and Education Center employees and a subsidy tuition fund for local families unable to afford full tuition.

Facility Ownership and Land Lease Agreement:

ERVC shall be the entity that owns the new early care and education center. The land, which is owned by the Town of Avon, will operate under a long-term land lease agreement between Town of Avon and ERVC. The land lease agreement will include terms addressing priority spaces for Town of Avon employees, the availability of tuition assistance for low-income families and requirements that the new facility may only be used for its intended purpose as an early childhood education and development center. The selected operator of the new early care and education center will enter into an operating lease agreement with ERVC.

Submission Requirements and Criteria

ERVC encourages proposals from all interested and qualified early care and education providers.

Proposals will be evaluated based on how the proposal satisfies the goals listed above and on the strength of the overall proposal and operator’s credentials. The RFP review will incorporate industry-recognized quality measures in assessing the strengths and weaknesses of proposed programs. ERVC reserves the right to select the entity that, at the sole discretion of ERVC, best satisfies the overall needs and interests of the project.

In evaluating proposals, ERVC will consider the following:

- 3-Year Business plan and proposed budget, including demonstrated financial standing or ability. The pro forma should include detailed calculations of revenue from sources (i.e. enrollment, CCAP), labor wages and hours by position, benefits, and expenses.
- Staffing Plan (teacher-to-child ratio, training, education, credentials, recruitment and retention).
- Proposed curriculum and early care and education philosophy, values and structure.
- Experience in the development and operation of early care and education centers

All proposals submitted for evaluation must include but are not limited to the information below.

General Business Information

1. Name and address of provider
2. Type of business: i.e. non-profit, sole proprietor, corporation, or partnership. List all officers or the person authorized to commit your firm to the proposal submitted. Applicants should know that ERVC may prioritize proposals that include nonprofit business models, however, we are open to discussion and consideration of all business models during the interview process.
3. Describe your organization, including number of staff, positions/titles, and areas of responsibility.
4. Provide relevant experience.
5. List any early care and education centers being operated, including contact names, addresses, and phone numbers. Provide licensing review and health inspection for the last three years for any currently operating early care and education centers.
6. Include information on standing with the state licensing department and the last 12 months of inspections from governing agencies.
7. Include a link to your website or online information. If access is required, please provide access as reasonable.

Operations

1. Describe your organization's philosophical approach to early care and education.
2. Describe how the Early Care and Education Center will be operated and managed on a day-to-day basis. Provide a copy or link to your current Parent Handbook, or similar documentation as described above. Include current copies of policies and procedures.
3. Describe your proposed curricula (including enrichment programs and learning goals that encompass activities to promote gross motor, fine motor, cognitive, language, and social development skills) for each age group.
4. Describe your approach to transitioning children from one age group to another, including the transition to kindergarten.
5. Describe your experience and approach to infant toddler care.
6. Describe your methods used to facilitate communication between the staff and parents (daily feedback reports, descriptions of incidents such as biting or accidents, etc.)
7. Describe systems in place to measure success and quality of services, including regular reporting that would be available to ERVC to assure quality/performance.
8. Describe and/or provide policies for security and safety of staff and children.

9. Describe capacity and methods for including children with physical and developmental disabilities.

Employees of the Early Care and Education Center

1. Describe your employee health benefit, sick leave policy, and vacation package. Include any discounts or free childcare benefits offered to staff members, if any.
2. Indicate staff turnover rate of any current operations.
3. Describe the methods used for evaluating staff performance.
4. Describe systems, procedures, and specific monitoring tools in place to ensure a quality staff performance.
5. Describe the methods used for developing and training staff.
6. Provide a listing of each job/position title used in your organization, or that you are proposing for this facility, and the hourly rate compensated for each job/position title.

Financial Standing & Business Plan

1. Include demonstration of financial standing or ability. Comment on whether your organization has ever been censured by any licensing authority for any actions.
2. Include a 3-year business plan that includes but is not limited to:
 - a. enrollment projections by age,
 - b. standard days/hours of operation.
 - c. accommodations for drop-ins or evening/weekend care (if included),
 - d. anticipated staff/child ratios,
 - e. staff training, qualifications, and credentials,
 - f. anticipated fee structure and competitive salary/benefits package,
 - g. anticipated revenues and expenses, and
 - h. a timetable for beginning services and steps leading up to that date.
 - i. The plan should also explain how the provider intends to meet the current needs of the community (for example cost burden households, non-English speaking households) as well as the changing needs of the community.
3. Propose a pricing model that includes a breakdown of children by age/room:
 - a. Accounting for variables in the year such as off-track, summer vacation, part, and full-time children.
 - b. Including a monthly price per child for all levels of care for infants through age 5.
 - c. Including the total monthly cost for 165 children, include a breakdown by age/number to create the total cost.
 - d. Including any discounts that may be offered for a second or third child in the Early Care and Education Center.
4. Review insurance requirements and ensure you can meet the requirements. Provide a statement assuring you can meet those requirements.
5. Describe monthly compliance/financial reporting that could be provided to ERVC.

Mandatory Qualifications and Requirements:

1. The provider must be licensed (or able to be licensed) to operate within Eagle County and the State of Colorado.
2. The provider will be required to enter a lease or license for the property. Terms to be mutually acceptable.
3. The provider will be required to provide proof of worker's compensation insurance, and general liability insurance with combined single limits of not less than \$1,000,000.

Proposals shall be submitted to:

Eagle River Valley Childcare

Attn: Sarah Franke

sfranke@vfv.org

Proposals are due no later than 5:00pm MST, on November 15, 2024.

Questions regarding this RFP may be directed to Sarah Franke at 970.777.2015 or sfranke@vfv.org.

EAGLE RIVER VALLEY CHILDCARE RESERVES THE RIGHT TO WAIVE ANY SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENT AND SUBMIT DUE DATE AND RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY AND ALL PROPOSALS.