



IDEA Fund Innovation Awards
Guidance Document
January 31, 2025

Franklin County RISE is excited to introduce the IDEA Fund Innovation Awards, a new opportunity designed to support and enhance childcare programs through creative and impactful solutions. This year, 90 childcare programs will be selected to receive awards, empowering them to implement innovative ideas that strengthen their services. These awards provide programs with the chance to explore fresh approaches to improving quality, accessibility, and overall program success. Applicants can submit proposals in one of four categories, ensuring a diverse range of initiatives that address the evolving needs of children, families, and educators.

- Categories for Innovation Grants
 - Equity in Literacy for Diverse Learners
 - Option 1: Preset Multicultural Library Set
 - Option 2: Open-Ended Solution (please describe your proposed solution): Targeting initiatives that specifically improve literacy rates addressing challenges disproportionately faced by both students of Color (especially Black Boys) and dual-language learners.
 - Classroom Enhancements
 - Option 1: Preset Classroom Solutions
 - Option 2: Open-Ended Solution (please describe your proposed solution): Grants aimed at improving the physical classroom environment, such as purchasing new learning materials, technology, or furniture that enhances the learning experience for children.
 - SUTQ Support
 - Option 1: Curriculum Implementation Support: As the Department of Children and Youth (DCY) begins to disseminate the free curriculum offered to providers in October, creating this category ensures providers have the support they need.
 - Option 2: Professional Development Support: Initiatives aimed at improving the skills, qualifications, and well-being of early



childhood educators as well as more comprehensive professional development.

- Option 3: Increasing SUTQ Level Support
- Open-ended Innovation
 - Please describe the innovative idea you believe will improve early care and learning experience at your site.

Award Levels

- \$15,000 – 10 programs will be awarded
- \$10,000 – 15 programs will be awarded
- \$5,000 – 20 programs will be awarded
- Preset Bundled Options – 45 programs will be awarded

As part of the application, all applicants must describe their innovative ideas in a written proposal through a series of guided prompts. All proposals will be judged against a rubric which is provided in the materials.

Letter of Intent Prompts

- Tell us your program's story: Tell us a little bit about who you are and the children you serve. What makes your program unique? How are you connected to the community around you?
- What is the need that this award would address and how will attaining it impact your program?
- Do you see this solution being something that other programs can replicate? Describe how you foresee other programs doing this.
- A line item budget for how you plan to use the funds including prices from specific vendors (the budget template is provided in the materials).
- Tell us about your program's commitment to equitable and inclusive practices.

Timeline

- Application window – March 3, 2025 – April 30, 2025
- Review window – May 1, 2025 – May 31, 2025



- Awardees announced – June 2, 2025
- Reconciliation for cash awards due – September 30, 2025