



Good Start Grants - Guidelines

Funding provided by United Way of Marathon County & B.A. & Esther Greenheck Foundation

Good Start Grants provides financial assistance for eligible families in Marathon County, to ensure they have access to quality, affordable child care; this is dependent upon continued funding.

Eligibility Guidelines: The following are simply guidelines. However, each application is reviewed, and eligibility is determined on a case-by-case basis.

- Families must reside in Marathon County
- Families that qualify and receive Wisconsin Shares are **not** eligible.
 - If income falls within the WI Shares qualification guidelines, a recent denial letter will be required annually showing reason of ineligibility for WI Shares. We reserve the right to deny this request based on the reason for denial of WI Shares.
 - Childcaring, Inc. may contact the local WI Shares caseworker to get clarification on reason for denial.
- Families gross monthly income must be below 300% of the current, Federal Poverty Level:

Family Size

FPL	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
300%	\$3,982.50	\$5,022.50	\$6,062.50	\$7,102.50	\$8,142.50	\$9,182.50	\$10,022.50	\$11,262.50	\$12,302.50

Effective 02/1/2015

- Families must participate in an approved activity, school and/or work.
 - The hours of child care that will be authorized will be based on school/work schedule.
 - Good Start Grants may cover up to 24 months of schooling
- Family members employed at a Good Start Grant program are eligible to apply for Good Start Grants, however, they are not allowed to provide the care for their own children or be in the same room as their children.
- All paperwork must be complete and submitted to Childcaring, Inc. before payments will be granted.
- Attendance must be consistent for enrollment. Childcaring, Inc. reserves the right to terminate participants from the program if hours are not utilized according to hours stated on application.
- Families are responsible for reporting any changes in address, family members, income, employment, school schedule, and/or child care provider to Childcaring, Inc. within 10 days of change. Failure to do so may result in termination from program.

Program Basics - How do I apply?

- Complete entire application form. Sign it and return to Childcaring, Inc. with:
 - Proof of your family's most recent income (both earned and unearned)
 - If you are paid weekly, 4 consecutive paycheck stubs; biweekly, 2 consecutive paycheck stubs; monthly, 2 consecutive paycheck stubs
 - If just starting employment, a written document stating hours and rate of pay signed by employer will be accepted, but must be followed up with paycheck stubs.
 - If income falls within WI Shares qualification guidelines, a recent denial letter showing reason of denial.
 - Most recent tax return or W-2.
 - If using Good Start Grants for school, please include your class schedule.
 - You may be asked to show progress/grade completion.

Who is considered part of my family? *The following descriptions are for Good Start Grants purposes only.*

- Of the people living in your home, your family includes: yourself, your spouse and your children who are under 18.
- If you are the guardian of children living in your home who are not biologically yours, they are part of your family.
- If you are not married, but the other parent of any of your children lives in your home, he or she and their children are considered part of your family.

How long will it take?

- You may be eligible for Good Start Grants, after Childcaring, Inc. has received your completed application and supporting documents.
- It may take up to a week to process your application; you will receive notification of approval / denial.
- Payments will be made directly to the child care provider

Once I am determined eligible, what do I need to do to maintain my eligibility?

- You must notify Childcaring, Inc. in writing of any changes within 10 days. Changes include:
 - Address, family members, income, employment, school schedule, and/or child care provider.
 - Failure to report changes could result in a penalty or termination from the Good Start Grants program.
- Submit a renewal application with all the required documentation every six months (May and November).
 - Failure to submit all required documentation by the renewal deadline may result in penalty or termination from the Good Start Grants program.
 - Submitting a renewal application does not guarantee approval of funds for the next authorization period. Applications are processed in the order they are received and only as funding allows.
- Provide feedback and complete surveys as requested.
- Attend an approved workshop before your renewal application is due, and annually thereafter as long as enrolled in Good Start Grants.*
 - Families will receive a list of agencies that provide approved workshops (Family Resource Center, UW-Extension, NTC, etc.) with your Authorization Form.
 - If you are aware of a different agency/opportunity that is not included on this list, contact Childcaring, Inc. for approval before attending.
 - Proof of attendance must be submitted to Childcaring, Inc. before a renewal application will be approved; a specific date will be included on your Authorization Form.
 - Proof may include a transcript, promotional flyer signed by the Instructor, certificate of attendance, etc.

*Currently families are not required to attend an approved workshop – families will be notified when this becomes a requirement.

Will I have to pay anything?

- Yes. You are responsible for paying your child care provider the difference, between what the provider charges and what Good Start Grants pays.
 - Failure to pay your parent portion will result in denial of future assistance until balance is paid in full.
 - This includes transfer or re-enrollment at other participating programs.
 - Childcaring, Inc. will communicate with participating programs regarding unpaid parent portions through the Good Start Grants program.
 - Good Start Grants pays a portion of your child care tuition directly to your child care provider. Payment is determined on a case by case basis. You will be notified once approved what your parent portion will be.
 - Good Start Grants does not cover registration fees, supply fees, or any additional charges outside of weekly tuition.

Which child care provider(s) can I use?

- An approved child care provider must have a YoungStar rating of 3 Stars or higher.
 - A list is available, from Childcaring, Inc., upon request.

Please send completed application with supporting documents to:

**Childcaring, Inc.
407 W Main St.
Merrill, WI 54452.**

Or by email: rachele@childcaring.org

**Please make sure the following documents are included with your application.
Failure to do so may result in denial of Good Start Grants:**

- ✓ Signed and completed Good Start Grants Application
- ✓ Proof of your family's income (both earned and unearned)
 - If you are paid weekly, 4 consecutive paycheck stubs; biweekly, 2 consecutive paycheck stubs; monthly, 2 consecutive paycheck stubs
 - If employment has not started yet, a signed letter from your employer stating wage, hours per week, and first date of employment will be accepted; followed up with paycheck stubs when received
- ✓ Wisconsin Shares denial letter
- ✓ School Schedule (if using grants for school)