IDENTIFY AND RECRUIT FCC PROVIDER MEMBERS

Participants: Identify FCC providers that can participate – based on financial need/interest, geography, years in business, quality level, or other metrics. SFCCNs come together in many different ways. When a group of FCC providers initiates a SFCCN, members self-select into the group. In some instances, a third-party entity serves as a catalyst to incubate a SFCCN. When this happens, an initial group of providers will be selected to work as the "founding members". However they enter the SFCCN, providers must recognize and embrace the following principles:

- Participating providers must be willing to operate differently than in the past, including a willingness to use automation in support of best business and pedagogical practices.
- Trust among and between members and the Hub(s) must be present, or must be quickly established, as members will need to share information and data, related to children/families, the organization, and financials, with the Hub for meaningful business leadership to occur.
- Shared values around program and quality issues is key.

It can be helpful to begin with organizations familiar with each other and/or the Hub organization(s), perhaps through a community organization, or provider network. Sometimes it makes sense to start small, such as a partnership of 5-10 providers, and gradually expand the SFCCN as experience and confidence increase.

Identifying Early Childhood Education providers for a Staffed Family Child Care Network
Many factors and characteristics contribute to the likelihood of a provider experiencing success through membership in a SFCCN. The singular most important factor, however, is a provider's **interest in, and willingness and ability to change.**

Change requires **honesty** in assessing where you are now so that you can take steps toward where you want to go.
- Can you be honest with others about the operation of your child care program?
- Are you comfortable sharing data about your program, even data that doesn't reflect positively on you?

Changes requires a **vision** for where you want to go.
- Are you ready to acknowledge that the current method of operating your program isn't working?
- Do you believe that there can be a better way?
- Are you committed to providing quality services to children and their families?

Change requires a willingness to make the **hard decisions.**

- In order to support both quality <u>and</u> sustainability, ECE programs must access and use every available resource efficiently and effectively; this can sometimes mean making difficult decisions, including:
    - Terminating services for families who do not pay and are unwilling to work with the provider to address the problem.
    - Making data driven business decisions that may result in changed relationships, i.e. selecting a different food vendor, insurance broker, etc., if there are significant savings and other benefits from an alternative.

It is important to define **criteria for SFCCN** membership, both initially and as the Network grows. A key role that a SFCCN can play is to demonstrate – to families and funders – how its members differ from other providers *because they are part of a larger whole*. To effectively differentiate by quality, it is important to select a measure that articulates the difference clearly.

In states with Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS), a SFCCN can require all members to participate in the QRIS and select a specific star rating as the standard to which all members should aspire. Selecting QRIS as the quality standard often has the additional benefit of ensuring that SFCCN members have increased access to technical assistance and funding linked to quality. In states with no QRIS, or where QRIS is voluntary and not widely utilized, other quality measurements can be used, such as:

- Classroom Assessments, based on Environmental Rating Scales (ITERS, ECERS, and FCCERS), CLASS or another standardized tool;
- Quality measurements implemented by state or local government ECE agencies;
- Accreditation by national organizations, such as NAFCC, or participation in an accreditation facilitation initiative.

Value Proposition
While establishing membership criteria is important, a Hub must also articulate a **value proposition, or explicit benefit to the provider,** in order to interest eligible FCC providers in membership. The value proposition focuses on what services the members receive and what benefits they can be expected to experience thanks to these services.

The graphics below illustrate how a SFCCN adds value for a FCC provider.

VALUE PROPOSITION FOR STAFFED FAMILY CHILD CARE NETWORK

SFCCN uses CCMS and support provider onboarding	SFCCN helps Miss Betty convert to 100% electronic payment for families -- which tracks payments and creates invoices
SFCCN pulls attendance data from CCMS and bills state for subsidy	Miss Betty receives payment faster; the Network addresses any errors so she receives full payment
CCMS collects and organizes receipts, time logs, payments, etc.	Miss Betty receives financial reports and works with her coach to make decisions to strengthen her business
SFCCN creates a website and conducts marketing activities, helps manage a wait list, etc.	Miss Betty can better predict when children will leave and fills vacancies much faster, maintaining 95% enrollment
SFCCN provides access to bulk purchasing of food and supplies	Miss Betty has lower costs and saves time on shopping for food and supplies
SFCCN supports authentic child assessment through digital tools	Miss Betty is able to collect, report, and use child outcome data to impact her teaching practice and meet the needs of individual children

COMPARISON: Business Metrics

	INDEPENDENT	**IN SFCCN**
ENROLLMENT/VACANCY	Before joining the SFCCN, there were typically vacancies - between one and three slots vacant at any point in time. On average her enrollment rate last year was 80%	Full with no vacancies: 98% due to families not providing adequate notice of departures, etc.
COLLECTIONS	Before joining the SFCCN there were typically 2 families that did not pay their co-payment and Ms. Betty didn't reconcile subsidy payments to identify and resolve errors - this resulted in a collection ratio of 90%.	98% due to the back office monitoring late/nonpayment and addressing issues in a timely way; reconciliation of subsidy payments within the allotted window for corrections

COMPARISON: Weekly Hours Worked

	INDEPENDENT	**IN SFCCN**
Hours of Work/Week	50 hours direct care (7:30 – 5:30)	50 hours direct care
	6 hours administration Attendance, subsidy tracking/ billing, fee collection, state reporting; tracking expenses/ financials	2 hours administration Reconciling payments; uploading receipts; state paperwork
	8 hours program Lesson planning, assessment, reporting	5 hours program Lesson planning, assessment, reporting
	6 hours miscellaneous Cleaning, shopping, etc.	3 hours miscellaneous Cleaning, shopping, etc.
TOTAL	**70 hours per week**	**60 hours per week**

COMPARISON: Annual Earnings

	With Business Leadership	Stand-Alone
Market price avg monthly tuition (per child)	$600	$600
Total capacity of home	12	12
% of market tuition captured	100%	90%
Actual monthly tuition charged	$600	$450
Vacancy rate	5%	25%
Total potential revenue	$82,080	$61,560
% of tuition collected (bad debt)	100%	90%
Estimated Annual Revenue	**$82,080**	**$55,404**
Expenses (Assistant wages, materials, services, etc.)	**$34,150**	**$31,907**
Net Revenue to FCC Home Provider	**$47,930**	**$23,497**

Iron triangle
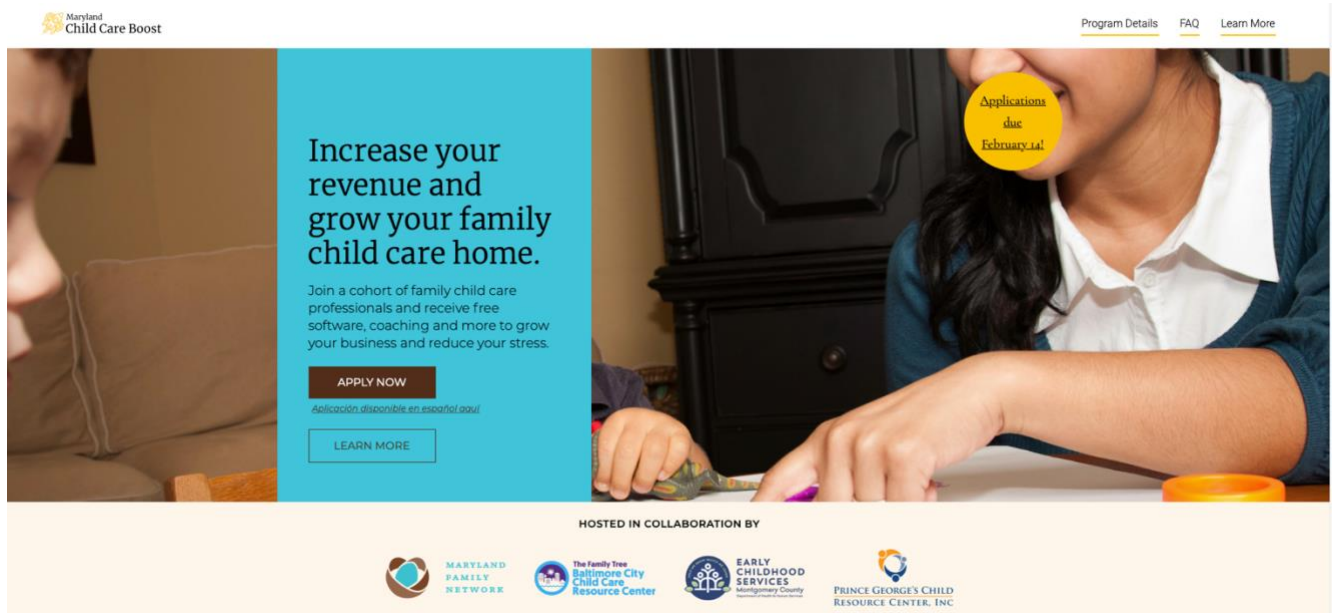
Marketing
Once the Hub has determined the parameters around FCC provider membership, the Hub will need to create a provider recruitment strategy and related marketing materials. Sample materials have been provided below based on a recent SFCCN launch.

First the Hub clarified the recruitment goal – in this case it was "to help family child care providers in our region to learn about the SFCCN program and convince a minimum of 80 providers to apply to participate." Then the Hub defined the target audience:

The Hub then defined the elements of and messaging for the recruitment campaign, including: Facebook posts, Email, Newsletters, Website, Informational Sessions. *(Providers may need to see this multiple times before they decide to say yes).*

The project created a simple website to provide information, field questions, and give access to the application materials (Screenshot below):

The Hub will want to consider the "voice" of the campaign – the goal of the SFCCN that created the materials below was to create a friendly, encouraging, and open style in all the recruitment campaign materials. Key to the messaging is a shared understanding of what services the Hub will provide and what benefits will be realized for members. In the example provided, this document summarized the services and benefits and drove the provider recruitment messaging (notice the emphasis on YOU - the provider)

Services	Advantages/Description	Benefits
Free child care management solution	Easy-to-use software that helps you manage your program operations and your business. Includes online check-in and check-out, parent communication, meal/snack tracking and reporting, tuition collection, expense management, teaching / assistant management, and more.	Reduce your administrative workload, go paperless, and collect on-time payments, to give you more time to focus on running your business and providing quality care to your community.
Marketing Support	Automatically share your up-to-date availability with families through the only approved, searchable database for families to find care (LOCATE).	Fill your open spots faster through technology and marketing support. Increase revenue while decreasing operational costs related to marketing.

Business Coaching	Coaching to help you solve difficult and time-consuming business problems such as record keeping and tax management. Support to help you maintain your commitment to providing high-quality child care and early education.	Join a professional cohort and learn how to make more money while reducing your workload alongside your colleagues. Your coach will help you focus on enrollment and improving your financial stability so you can reduce your level of stress.

Key headlines that came out of the service and benefits included:
- Save time and increase your family child care home's revenue.
  - **Reduce your administrative workload:** Receive free software to help you automate your business tasks, reduce your workload, and collect payments on-time, every time.
  - **Increase your bottom line:** share your up-to-date availability with families across the city and fill your spots faster.
  - **Grow alongside your community:** receive free coaching to help you solve time-consuming business problems and maintain your commitment to providing high-quality care alongside a professional cohort of family child care providers.
  - **Reduce your stress:** Gain a support system of peers and experts that, together with automation, can reduce your workload and contribute jointly to your success.
- Build a sustainable child care business now; join the MD Child Care Management Support Program.
- Running a quality child care home takes hard work. You don't have to do it alone.
- Make more money. Reduce your to-dos. Grow your business.
- Now accepting a limited number of family child care homes.

The SFCCN used in this example outlined the following recruitment timeline and demonstrates how to move through the process with both speed and intentionality:

- Weeks 1-4: Campaign Creation
- Weeks 5-7: Outreach Campaign & Application Submission
- End of Week 7: Applications Due
- Weeks 8-9: Application Review & FCC Approval
- Week 10: Agreements
- Weeks 10-12: FCC Announcement, agreements signed, baseline data collected
- Week 13: PILOT LAUNCHES

![Opportunities Exchange logo]

The organization developed an FAQ and updated it frequently as questions were raised by providers.

[Download a copy of the **Sample FAQ for SFCCN** from the website](#)

Staffed Family Child Care Network: Frequently Asked Questions

- **What is this program?**

The SFCCN is a free 18-month program to help you and family child care program make more money, reduce your administrative task list, and relieve the stress that running a business can bring (especially one during COVID!). If accepted, you'll be a part of a cohort of other Family Child Care professionals and gain the support of business coaches to help you implement software tools, refine your business goals, and find ways to increase your revenue and bottom line.

- **Is this really free?**

Yes, it is free for 18-months, and you will always be connected to your cohort. If you choose to continue with the software you will need to pay a monthly fee.

- **What are the qualifications?**

You must:

- be a family child care business owner
- be in business for at least 18 months
- Active in child care advocacy/organizations or coalitions or structured child care communities/alliances
- Actively participate or are willing to enroll in the state quality system
- Have a computer, tablet, and/or touch-screen phone (no more than 3 years old)
- Have reliable internet access
- Agree to participate in the program for 18 months (as long as you are in business)
- Commit to using new software consistently (daily for check-in and check-out) to help reduce your to-dos and provide your coaches with business data to help you reach your goals.
- Have continuous, open dialogue with your new coach. The more open you are, the more the coach can support.
- Engage and connect online with your professional cohort. This is a group that you can lean on for the good and the bad.
- **I'm worried that the technology will be too complex for my program.**

We're providing simple, fast and free software to help you manage your program from a phone, computer or tablet. The software was designed for and is used by hundreds of family child care programs across the country. We will also provide support every step of the way, from onboarding to implementation.

- **I'm just getting started -- do I need this?**

The SFCCN is open to all Owners/Directors to help you build on the foundation you've already created. As long as you have been in your role for at least 18 months you are encouraged to apply.

- **I'm not organized enough – I'm embarrassed to have someone else see my information.**

We understand how challenging it can be to stay on top of all of the administrative demands of your business. If your files are unorganized then you need the help of automation and a Business Coach! No judgement - just help in tidying up your operations and reducing your administrative burdens.

- **I don't have time to learn how to do this.**

Spending a few hours per week (2-3!) to learn and use the software will save you time day in and day out. Meeting with your coach to analyze your data and improve your business and quality practices will improve your program and your bottom line. The time you spend learning the software is a long-term investment in your business.

- **English isn't my native language.**

We have program staff and coaches who are Spanish-speaking. And the software is available in Spanish.

- **Why did you create the SFCCN?**

Child care is an essential service, and COVID highlighted this and the fact that child care programs need more support to survive and thrive. Our mission is to help you build a sustainable business, increase your revenue, and eliminate business struggles that keep you from growing.