



# Tips & Strategies for Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (CCR&Rs) on Staffed Family Child Care Networks (SFCCNs)



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## Purpose

This document was created to provide tips and strategies for [Child Care Resource and Referral agencies \(CCR&Rs\)](#) to consider when developing and maintaining a Staffed Family Child Care Network (SFCCN), either within their own agency or in partnership with another entity or organization. To that end, this document was created in partnership with CCR&Rs and their staff who participated in CCAoA's Family Child Care Promising CCR&R Practices Communities of Practice (CoP) held in 2023. It highlights their experiences, challenges and successes as their services have evolved and progressed to support Home-Based Child Care (HBCC) providers through the development or enhancement of SFCCNs.

The term “home-based child care” used throughout this document is intended to be inclusive of all child care provided in an individual’s home. These providers include licensed family child care providers, unregulated or unlicensed providers, registered providers and family, friend or neighbor care.



# Background and Need for SFCCNs

## Decline in HBCC

Home-Based Child Care (HBCC) has always been and will always be a significant and essential part of parental choice in child care across the country. Because HBCC satisfies parental demand for care in a setting that is like their own home and respects their cultures, traditions and values, families may opt for this type of care over other options that may have larger groups of children. According to Child Care Aware® of America's report, "[Catalyzing Growth: Using Data to Change Child Care 2022](#)," the number of HBCC providers has declined, and continued declining between 2021 and 2022. The decline in licensed Family Child Care (FCC) was smaller than in recent years, but the trend remains downward overall. Data showed that there were 106,889 licensed FCC homes open in 2019 and 94,936 open in 2022 in 39 states that had available data. From 2021 to 2022, approximately 2% fewer FCC homes were open. Overall, there has been an 11% decline in licensed FCC homes since 2019.

This decline in the HBCC option has had the greatest [impact](#) on vulnerable groups and low-income households that already had few options for high-quality, inexpensive child care before the COVID-19 outbreak and are now left with even fewer choices. It is due to this changing child care landscape that it is now critical that we examine what new approaches should be considered to make sure that high-quality child care is available, accessible and affordable for all families who require care.

As a result of the crisis HBCC is facing, it is urgent that we look at how the workforce has been affected.

Years of low wages and lack of benefits, followed by layoffs due to COVID-19, have resulted in severe staffing shortages for HBCC programs. In addition, more HBCC owners are retiring than new providers are entering the field. It is important to look at who is providing support to these providers because they continue to provide care and support to children and their families.

Those who offer support to HBCC providers, like CCR&Rs, are asking themselves what effective initiatives, programs, practices or services will be effective in sustaining HBCC providers while also addressing the current labor shortage problems facing the industry. Burnout, a lack of suitable professional growth, low pay and a lack of benefits are but a few of the problems. It is imperative to choose and implement methods for attracting, assisting and keeping HBCC providers. For these providers to enter and remain in the sector, it is necessary to create and implement methods for recruitment, support and retention to build capacity by creating dedicated and intentional services for HBCC.

These needs are particularly acute for HBCC after peak COVID-19 pandemic impacts and for those in disaster-affected or prone communities. The compounding, negative effects of these destabilizing forces can result in business closures. SFCCNs are one of the most recent and significant quality improvement initiatives being provided to address these issues. And CCR&Rs are well positioned and ready to respond and help HBCC adapt and be resilient.

## Definition and Importance of Supporting HBCC through SFCCNs

According to [Bromer and Porter \(2017\)](#) from the Erikson Institute, SFCCNs are defined as organizations that offer HBCC providers a menu of quality improvement services and supports, including technical assistance and professional development, that is delivered by paid staff members. Various network service models exist that offer a variety of support, but most offer some type of opportunity for providers to build relationships with their peers and ongoing interactions with a professional coordinator or family child care specialist. Providers participating in SFCCNs report that these opportunities ease isolation that many report feeling working alone with limited adult interaction.

Different agencies and programs may operate as a SFCCN, such as community-, city-, region- or state-run organizations, or may be provider-led through associations and groups. Many CCR&Rs offer SFCCNs support in their role of strengthening HBCC within their service areas.



### Benefits of Supporting HBCC through SFCCNs

The Office of Child Care (OCC) highlighted family child care networks as a quality improvement strategy for helping HBCC providers comply with the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Final Regulations requirements for improving quality (CCDF 45 C.F.R. § 98.53(a)(4)(i) (2016). SFCCNs can offer many supports that can be especially helpful to providers if they are situated in local areas and include staff members who are knowledgeable about the local culture and have experience providing HBCC.

**The following advantages and possibilities are provided by SFCCNs for HBCC providers:**

- Accreditation support
- Assistance navigating regulations and quality initiatives
- Assistance navigating the licensing and subsidy system
- Connecting providers to technology and information technology (IT)
- Data collection support for quality initiatives and state requirements
- Opportunities for providers to share and learn from each other
- Peer networking with those with similar backgrounds, experience, culture and language
- Referrals to families
- Scholarships and grants for continuing education
- Shared services support to programs to lower overall program costs, which might include enrollment support, fee collections, marketing and participation in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)
- Start-up and grant writing support
- Support for operations and business practices, such as budget planning and emergency planning and disaster preparedness
- Targeted professional development specific to HBCC support
- Tax preparation assistance



## CCAoA's Family Child Care Promising CCR&R Practices Communities of Practice (CoP)

To tackle the HBCC workforce issues that were exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, members of the Family Child Care Promising CCR&R Practices CoP reviewed a series of best practices to establish, support and maintain in-home child care businesses. By examining best practices and sharing challenges and successes with each other, CoP members conceived several tips and strategies to serve as guidance and support to other CCR&Rs considering the development and implementation of a SFCCN. These tips and strategies serve as a resource to CCR&Rs as they build dedicated and intentional services to support the economic and mental health needs of COVID-19 impacted HBCC providers in their communities, as well as new providers just starting out.

### Best Practices Defined:

*Best practices are often used to promote a range of individual activities, policies and programmatic approaches to achieve a desired result. They are described as the best way to do something. The best practices in each section describe the desired support for providing and implementing services for HBCC providers.*

### Tips and Strategies Defined:

*The tips and strategies shared by Communities of Practice (CoP) members are collective responses based on experience, shared knowledge and professional wisdom regarding each topic examined during the CoP, which includes Assessing Provider Needs, CCR&R Staffing Support and Direct Services to HBCC Providers.*



Each of the sections of this document summarizes best practices derived from CCAoA Best Practices, experts on the topic and relevant national organization resources. The highlighted tips and strategies were shared by CoP members during large group conversations and small group breakout sessions. Each section also includes a spotlight on a CoP member that exemplifies the best practice highlighted in each section



## Assess HBCC Provider Needs

The first step in developing a new program, initiative, practice or service, such as SFCCNs, is to assess the interest in the program from the provider's point of view. This step helps in making informed decisions about how to move forward using the data collected through the assessment process. This data can be collected in various ways, including surveys, interviews, focus groups or questionnaires. These data collection methods are useful to collect explicit data and gather insights from HBCC providers regarding the issues they face and the potential impact of the new program or initiative being considered.

One topic that members of the CoP discussed was that of providers expressing a desire to have more input into the services being offered to the HBCC community and to allow providers a greater voice in addressing the challenges they experience. A breakout group of CoP participants shared that they have seen an increase in providers' desire to express specific needs as a result of the pandemic. They reported that HBCC providers "want to be heard and be able to share their concerns, challenges and needs." A comprehensive needs assessment process ensures that providers have that voice, particularly as it relates to new programming such as SFCCNs.

### The benefits of conducting a needs assessment include:

- Offers current data for decision making.
- Lays the foundation for planning and acting.
- Establishes objectives for future action.
- Creates awareness and recognition of problems or opportunities.
- Provides information to match resources to new programs, initiatives or services

To ensure needs assessments are developed, implemented and evaluated to get reliable and accurate data, the following best practices were synthesized from a variety of sources.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>See: U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM)-[Training Needs Assessment](#); the American Academy of Pediatrics Online Learning Center on [Instructional Design](#); The National Institute for Children's Health Quality (NICHQ)-[Seven Steps for Conducting a Successful Needs Assessment](#); and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Health Schools [Training Tools](#).

## Needs Assessment Process

- **Determine** desired outcomes of the needs assessment process, such as assessing the need for developing a SFCCN.
- **Invite** HBCC providers to help plan, implement and collaborate throughout the process.
- **Plan**
  - Set goals/objectives for the needs assessment.
  - Review existing data.
  - Determine the target population for the needs assessment.
  - Determine that the resources are available to conduct a needs assessment (e.g., budget, people and time).
- **Select data collection method or methods** (interviews, focus groups, surveys, questionnaires). A table that outlines the pros and cons of these data collection formats can be found [here](#).
- **Conduct needs assessment**
  - Establish a timeline for conducting the needs assessment.
  - Determine the desired rate of response from the chosen data collection method.
  - Conduct the assessment.
- **Analyze the data collected**
  - Look for themes in the responses.
  - Aggregate data and explore differences in responses (e.g., licensed home-based providers, Family, Friends and Neighbor (FFN) providers, licensed exempt providers).
  - Synthesize your data. Examine the connections and meaning from various sources of information.
- **Share the findings**





## Tips and Strategies from CoP Members

This section highlights tips CoP members shared during large group and breakout sessions. The first CoP focused on discussing the experiences CoP members had when assessing the interest of HBCC providers in developing and participating in SFCCNs. The data gathered by CCR&Rs participating in the CoP informed the need for SFCCN services and the types of services providers were interested in, and gauged interest in peer networking, business support and wellness activities.

The primary theme that emerged throughout the many conversations was the need to have strong relationships with providers. CoP participants shared that these relationships led to higher response rates, honest feedback and a greater voice from HBCC providers.

CoP participants also shared tips addressing some of the challenges regarding assessing provider needs regarding SFCCNs and tips and strategies on sharing information gathered from needs assessments.

- Follow recommendations from best practices.
- Empower providers to engage in conversations with decision makers.
- Facilitate providers coming to the table with development, businesses, legislators, etc.
- Build relationships/trust with providers so they will be more open and willing to provide feedback honestly.
- Help providers recognize and share their value (what they bring to the table) as a critical piece of the child care puzzle.
- Create equitable opportunities/access to participate in those conversations with more engagement.
- Frame survey results for the greatest impact.
- Present survey results in a user-friendly way.
- Use innovative approaches to collecting and sharing needs assessment information

## INVITE HBCC PROVIDERS TO COLLABORATE

- **Establish a foundation of trust and build relationships with providers so they will be more open and willing to provide feedback honestly.**

A CoP participant said,

“ We must build a firm foundation before anything can be built, including relationships. People have different life experiences, so it is imperative that we tailor each experience to our core relationships... emotionally appealing to each individual's wants and needs, goals and past life experiences.

One CCR&R stated,

“ The relationship is so important, knowing that they have a safe place to go and that they will get the resources they need. We are not superheroes, but we can certainly help them, let them feel heard and...allow them to be vulnerable and let you know what they need.

As related to SFCCN development, another CoP member shared that is it

“ imperative for CCR&Rs to develop a reputation with the FCC community and understand the culture of FCC. Try not to fit FCC into an existing space and give them flexibility and space to do what they need. We must be true and consistent with our relationships as they are fragile.



- **Empower HBCC providers as professionals to encourage them to engage in conversations and help them see and share their value as a critical piece of the child care puzzle.** One member of the CoP, a CCR&R director who spent time traveling around the state to encourage investment in building the supply of child care in their communities, shared that “child care is not a one-size-fits-all... it is about getting FCC providers sitting at tables with development, businesses, etc. CCR&Rs need to empower FCC [providers] to become engaged in these conversations. It boils down to helping providers know that they have a voice and are an integral part of the child care system.” To assist them in seeing themselves as professionals, she added that “providers should be compensated for their time.” She shared this example, “One Chamber gave three providers in attendance each a \$50 gift card. Another had a gift card drawing at their community meeting and a provider won it.” Efforts such as this promote and illustrate the importance of valuing providers’ time and demonstrating that their input has value.*of FCC. Try not to fit FCC into an existing space and give them flexibility and space to do what they need. We must be true and consistent with our relationships as they are fragile.*

Another shared, “We had one provider talk to the governor and [they] said, ‘I only have one thing to say, increase our pay.’” CCR&Rs should provide support for HBCC providers to see themselves as professionals, feel empowered to share their needs and feel engaged in the decisions being made regarding the work they do.

A participant suggested linking needs assessment questions to the benchmarks from Home Grown, a national collaborative of funders committed to improving the quality of and access to home-based child care, as these benchmarks represent a picture of what a high-quality network strategy can look like and what services may be offered, as well as a specific provider voice benchmark.

- **Create equitable opportunities and access for HBCC providers to assess their needs.** When developing a new initiative or program such as SFCCN it is important that we ask providers how they would best like to share information and feedback with CCR&Rs. Response rates to questions regarding services rise when everyone can share information that is important to them and there should be consideration of the time it takes to complete a survey, respond to a questionnaire or be available for an interview.

A participant shared,

“ Time to put thoughtful answers into providing information on needs assessments is ‘money’ to the provider. Therefore, offering incentives or a gift card drawing for those who complete needs assessments should be considered. It is a form of compensation and shows respect for the HBCC provider’s time, that they should not have to give us all this info for free.



## SELECT DATA COLLECTION METHOD OR METHODS

To determine the need or gather feedback regarding SFCCN it is valuable to select an appropriate method for collecting the information. Each data collection method has its own pros and cons, such as time for completion, generalized or in-depth feedback, and large or small number of respondents. Determining the best data collection approach requires matching the purpose of the needs assessment to the desired outcome, such as development of a new initiative like SFCCNs.

One CoP member shared a way to increase response rates for needs assessments is to ensure that those whose primary language is not English have a voice. Data collection methods should be considered for populations with limited English proficiency. Suggestions resulting from the CoP discussion included offering translation services or offering surveys and questionnaires in languages spoken by the providers. This ensures all voices are represented and relevant feedback is provided upon which sound decisions can be made.

## CONDUCT NEEDS ASSESSMENT

- **Messaging is critical.** Frustration with needs assessments increases for HBCC providers when messaging around the reasons for gathering the information and how it will be used are unclear. CoP members shared that providers often report they do not know how their information will be used and are averse to responding to needs assessment when they are skeptical about potential uses of the data. However, if there is a clear purpose stated for how the data being collected will be used and the results are shared in a timely and useful manner, it gives credibility to the process of data gathering. When providers see the information that they provided is being used to drive change, it helps build trust. Being listened to and feeling heard drives buy-in for a new program or service and continues the relationship-building process.

CoP members shared examples of questions from providers when directions are confusing or when information is not shared regarding how the results will be used. In those cases, HBCC providers become skeptical of participating in the process. **Frequent questions from providers that were shared by CoP members include:**

- Who is to complete the assessment?
- Why is this information important?
- How will my information be used?
- Will my feedback result in unintended consequences? One participant shared that HBCC providers call with concern after every type of needs assessment is launched, indicating that she receives a lot of questions about why the information is needed.
- Can I be truthful with my responses without feeling I will receive a visit from licensing?

- **Consider response rates.** CoP participants shared that response rates can vary. “We have struggled with needs assessment surveys. We send out so many for different things. The providers get confused.” They also report it is time consuming to send out multiple reminders to complete the needs assessment.

One participant disclosed that, “Another challenge is how busy HBCC providers are, and they just do not have time or cannot add one more thing to their to-do list. We must remember that they do not work eight hours a day; they work more like 12-14 [hours] when you add the extras they have to do when not watching the children.” Another shared that “it is important that we put ourselves in the FCC providers’ shoes and reflect on what we are asking of them.”

## SHARE THE FINDINGS

A reported key to success by CoP members regarding their needs assessments for SFCCNs is to keep needs assessment respondents informed. CoP members reported they were most successful when they communicated information about when and how results would be shared and used. Consider including a schedule in the needs assessment announcement to give a rough deadline for delivering results. Communicate findings as soon as possible, while people are still thinking about the subject.

- **Focus on the most vital information.** Concentrate on key details when presenting the findings. After a brief introduction that recaps the survey’s purpose, include a summary of the important findings. Draw attention to the facts that aligned most and least with the current goals. If appropriate, evaluate progress by comparing the findings to earlier surveys. Always include a plan outlining the steps that will be followed in response to the survey. Present survey results in a user-friendly way.

**Present findings as concisely and simply as possible.** Use graphs and pictures to represent the facts. Many people learn more quickly and retain knowledge longer when it is kept simple and presented visually. One CoP participant said, “We use [Microsoft] Forms to collect most of our responses, and the various presentations of data automatically created give us lots of methods/graphics to share the results. We also limit the choices to questions to keep the data clean/consistent.

One CoP participant advised, “Let them [the providers] know you care. Let the HBCC providers know that you care about what the results tell us and that we will use the information to help them and the family child care field.”

**Identify path ahead from findings.** Needs assessments can occasionally show that much more work needs to be done. Recognizing concerns demonstrates the willingness to face challenges head-on and there should be no concerns about sharing unfavorable information. Strive to remain positive and frame the results as a starting point for change. When the next needs assessment is conducted, more participation is sparked

by placing emphasis on finding solutions and being responsive to concerns. A concern shared from a CoP participant was that a Pandora's box could be opened by even asking questions. A strategy they shared to mitigate this potential was, "When introducing a survey to our FCC professionals, I like to preface it with the issue at hand, followed by our desire to develop strategy/planning to solve it. The goal is to stir excitement and motivation to follow through toward change.

**Encourage further discussion.** It is not necessary for useful information gathering to stop after the survey is over. By asking people to discuss the findings, participate in focus groups, and offer thoughts and comments, you can collect more useful information that will contribute to the development of new services or make improvements to programs, services and initiatives.





## Innovative approaches to needs assessments

As reported by CoP members, “We often just email surveys or questionnaires and if providers respond, they respond. If they do not, they do not.” Another followed up by sharing, “That says to us that those who want to complete needs assessments will do so. [Using] word of mouth they will tell others. As word of mouth goes out, then the response will be greater for the next one.” **Other group members responded by brainstorming additional approaches to collecting and sharing data and potentially increasing response rates with the goal of more accurate data reflecting voices across a spectrum of providers. Ideas included:**

- Host Influencer Sessions and/or Listening Sessions to get that face-to-face engagement, building on the relationship and trust.
- Text a QR code that is linked to a survey.
- Offer tutorials, assistance and help on using virtual technology for interviews and focus groups and new digital tools for surveys and questionnaires.
- Use texting web-based software such as Engaged by Cell or Message Media.
- Possibly use nurture-sequencing to aid in data collection. A CoP member shared that “A nurture sequence (sometimes called an email nurture series) is an automated series of emails that someone receives when they subscribe to your email lists. It starts to build trust with your subscribers and by nurturing them through a process, they stay connected.” An example shared by one CoP member, “For instance, a platform like Survey Monkey can create a nurture sequence email. Once a HBCC provider submits their responses to a survey or questionnaire it will link them to resources and additional services. The provider’s email would have to be captured somewhere in the survey.”
- Use storytelling models for sharing survey results. Data storytelling is the concept of building a compelling narrative based on data and analytics that help tell your story to influence and inform a particular audience. Data storytelling adds a human touch to the data and offers emotional appeal to those who benefit from information.
- Share the data in more appealing ways: Use social media, videos, infographics, storyboards, etc. Represent both quantitative data and the story it tells.
- Utilize providers to serve as ambassadors and pay them a stipend for reaching out to their peers to gather responses to needs assessments.

## CoP Member Spotlight: Assessing HBCC Provider Needs

### Illinois – 4-C: Community Coordinated Child Care

4-C submitted a copy of the survey they used to assess the interest of HBCC providers in engaging in services offered by a SFCCN. In reviewing the survey and accompanying documents, such as introduction emails and information flyers, there were several best practices exemplified in their approach to developing and using the survey to determine interest in this new initiative. The goals they set for the survey were clearly laid out in the survey's introduction and in emails sent to providers. The goals were: "increased social support and reduced isolation" of family child care providers through a family child care network called Family Child Care Connections. They determined that licensed family child care providers in their service area would complete the survey which was offered online and as a hard copy option. They also identified what family child care providers could expect by participating in the new network by stating:

**"In this group we will:**

- Host meetings with a set agenda, based on YOUR needs and wants.
- Provide guest speakers related to your issues.
- Have reflective conversations based on daily successes and challenges that Family Child Care providers share.
- Offer mentorship from others in the field.
- And much more!"

The email with the link to the survey included the timeline for completion of the survey in large, bold font, making it easy for participants to find the deadline for completion.

Questions included in the survey asked respondents demographic/identifying information and the best days of the week and times for meetings, and the preferred number of times to meet monthly. The information from these questions helped meet the needs of most respondents. The survey also asked about virtual or in-person meetings. The information gathered through these questions enabled effective planning to ensure maximum attendance. 4-C also planned questions to ask providers once respondents indicated interest: "Thank you for your interest in joining 4-C's Family Child Care Connections Group! Please answer the following questions so we can have your help in planning meetings!

1. What do you struggle with in your profession?
2. What support would you like to receive from these group meetings? (trainings, meetings with peers, connections with other agencies in your area, etc.)
3. Would you be willing to coach a new FCC starting out?"

Many of the best practices on surveys shared during the CoP were included in 4-C's approach to gauging interest in the new approach to supporting family child care providers. Expanding upon it and continuing to gather this type of information as the new SFCCN grows will continue to strengthen the project and meet the needs of this very important group of providers.



## Dedicate CCR&R Staff for HBCC

HBCC providers have the desire, drive and capability to succeed as educators and business owners who offer the best care for young children. Promising practices such as SFCCN can support HBCC providers to excel as these networks can provide the time, tools and assistance providers need to focus on best practices, new skill development, engagement with peers, or address their own emotional well-being. Some will desire to expand their experience and choose to engage in advocacy and/or regional/state-level decision-making tables. Additionally, the children and the families they support benefit when providers are successful. As a result, it is crucial that we examine SFCCN staffing and direct service support for providers that CCR&Rs should offer as best practice to ensure they have access to the services needed to thrive.

HBCC providers are business owners, professionals and experts, and should be treated and valued as such by their supporters, partners and selves. CCR&Rs can support and model this as they work with providers through SFCCNs.

Encouraging professionals to join the staff of CCR&Rs to use their expertise and experience to support providers involves building a comprehensive approach to hiring, having transparency in wages and benefits, and providing opportunities for career advancement. It is also important to recruit and retain CCR&R staff who are culturally responsive and willing to engage diverse learners by building strategies to design and deliver services to all providers.

**Here's how<sup>2</sup>:**

- Hire program staff whose role is to purposely target support to HBCC providers.
  - CCR&Rs should try their best to make this an exclusive job, without other responsibilities in other areas when possible. Understanding the role and how to work within it to support the culture of HBCC should be visited and revisited throughout the hiring/onboarding process.
- Create a job title that reflects the specific position the individual has in supporting HBCC.
- Develop a job description that outlines specific roles and responsibilities in supporting HBCC.
- Ensure staff have direct knowledge about HBCC and provide respect and understanding for HBCC providers.

<sup>2</sup>See: Center for the Study of Child Care Employment (CSCCE), the Early Child Knowledge and Learning Center: Developing a Search Strategy: Your Roadmap for Hiring, and OPRE-Building and Sustaining the Early Care and Education Workforce (BASE).

- Hire staff with expertise in early childhood education, either from working in HBCC or a child care center, with a background in business as a plus.
- To the extent possible, hire staff that reflect the cultural/ethnic/linguistic backgrounds of providers within the service area.
  - The intimate nature of a home requires a deep understanding of and respect for the individuals living there. This need for understanding and respect is taken a bit further when a business is operating from that same home.
- To the extent possible, have a strong benefits package (inclusive of health, mental health, ongoing professional development/compensation, retirement, free or discounted child care and vacation leave/PTO).
- Ensure staff have experience or training necessary in working with adults.
- Provide training to staff on the unique characteristics of HBCC and the common challenges they face (e.g., isolation, lack of peer-to-peer network, fulfilling multiple roles), development and care across the age span, adult learning styles, relationship-based and strength-based approaches, and cultural responsiveness and sensitivity.



## Tips and Strategies from CoP Members

CoP members shared various job titles, job descriptions, and roles and responsibilities from their agencies which highlight several of the recommended best practices for recruiting and retaining CCR&R staff who will support SFCCN services. One member's job description highlighted the passion for work and relationship building and trust needed in working with child care providers. They also highlighted that the position "will partner with the licensed family child care educators engaged in the family child care network, provide them support to level up their knowledge of best practices, empower them to help build their confidence, listen to the challenges they face, and identify the resources that exist to help them be more successful and connected." The job description included the salary and benefits offered, and competencies needed by staff to carry out the roles and responsibilities of the position.

Another CoP member shared their CCR&R's specific focus of the SFCCN position, stating, "Successful candidates will assist pre-licensed and provisionally licensed FCC programs to establish, and then maintain, their in-home child care businesses through one-on-one and group coaching with Family Child Care owners on a variety of strengths-based and business-focused tasks." The position also emphasized equity with the inclusion of two specific requirements: "Understanding of how race, gender, culture and class intersect to shape conditions for early childhood educators, child care programs, and the children and families they serve. A desire to contribute to a workplace and profession which values collaboration, diversity, growth, inclusion, equity, belonging and respect for all people."



### Tips for Staffing Support

- Be intentional toward supporting the culture of HBCC, which should be visited and revisited throughout the hiring/onboarding process.
- The intimate nature of a home requires a deep understanding of and respect for the individuals living and working there.
- Access a centralized source of PD and research, such as CCAoA, in order for CCR&R teams to learn and grow together.
- It is important to understand and empathize with the people you are working with as it provides a sense of security and creates an openness among colleagues.

## CoP Member Spotlight: CCR&R Staffing Support to HBCC Providers

### Oklahoma – Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness

Oklahoma shared information regarding their newest position, created to specifically support HBCC through SFCCN. They funded a contractual position entitled “Regional Ambassador.” According to the scope of work they shared, this individual will “Serve as the Regional Ambassador to the Staffed Family Child Care Network and, as such, support the network and be responsive to the needs of family child care programs while improving both program quality and financial sustainability.” This position highlights the best practice of hiring program staff whose role is to purposefully support HBCC. The new position’s scope of work highlights how the job title of Regional Ambassador reflects the role the “Ambassador” has in supporting the SFCCN and in lifting up provider successes, needs and concerns throughout their assigned regions.

The scope of work detailed in the Independent Contractor Agreement outlines the specific role expected of the Regional Ambassador and the responsibilities they have in supporting HBCC through the SFCCN. **Examples of responsibilities include:**

- Promote the SFCCN by contacting and recruiting potential members.
- Serve as a mentor to other Family Child Care Home providers through discussion and Q&A.
- Facilitate monthly meetings/training with local business consultants for HBCC providers.
- Serve as an ambassador for the network at community meetings, events, etc.
- Identify potential barriers, problem solve and offer solutions on how to enhance and grow the SFCCN.
- Encourage the use of [oksharedservices.org](http://oksharedservices.org), Oklahoma’s shared service model and the Child & Adult Care Food Program (CACFP).
- Review materials created for the network.
- Coordinate with the state Business Consultant and/or SFCCN Manager to contribute content to the monthly Business Blast Home Edition newsletter.
- Participate in the planning and implementation of an annual SFCCN Conference.

Oklahoma also shared an email sent to recruit individuals they believe could fill the role of Regional Ambassador. The email indicated, “We feel you have the experience, expertise and education that would make you a great fit to support our network,” which highlights the value the state places on ensuring staff have direct knowledge about HBCC and ensuring staff have experience or training necessary to work with adults.

The Individual Contractor Agreement clearly states the expected hours per month and rate per hour the Regional Ambassadors will commit to the work of SFCCN services. They are also clear on their benefits, with independent contractors not being offered benefits and taxes reported to the Internal Revenue Service. Issues such as confidentiality, service coordination and severability are also plainly defined.

Several best practices on staffing support to HBCC providers are stressed in Oklahoma’s Regional Ambassador position. It is an early step as their SFCCN is just taking root, and lays the groundwork for the possibility of a fully funded SFCCN Ambassador position in each CCR&R.



## Provide Services Tailored for HBCC

Federal Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) resources can be used for several direct services that CCR&Rs provide, including, but not limited to, engaging families with consumer education and information about child care financial assistance (subsidy); engaging child care providers in order to disseminate information about the availability of child care, including information about the quality of care (where that information is available); providing training and technical assistance for child care providers; and promoting quality and helping child care providers meet higher quality levels. In addition, in some states, CCR&Rs also administer CCDF child care financial assistance or other services (such as child care provider training, communicating with providers following disasters or administering quality improvement grants).

There are several best practices that guide the work to ensure that these direct services are provided equitably and efficiently. For our purposes, these services are targeted toward home-based child care, specifically SFCCN services, but they are applicable across all settings served by CCR&Rs. **Here's how<sup>3</sup>:**

### Best Practices for Providing Services Tailored for HBCC

- Develop specific strategies for the recruitment and retention of providers.
- Ensure active involvement of providers.
- Develop effective partnerships with providers using a strengths-based approach.
- Offer a variety of community engagement and communication approaches.
- Demonstrate respect for providers' knowledge, time and unique role, inclusive of their cultural, ethnic and linguistic backgrounds.
- Provide networks and social support.
- Offer financial and material incentives.

<sup>3</sup>See: Erikson Institute SFCCN Resources, Child Care Technical Assistance Network-CCDF Fundamentals, Child Care Technical Assistance Network - CCDF Key Provisions, Child Care Technical Assistance Network - Staffed Family Child Care Networks

## Tips and Strategies from CoP Members

### RECRUITMENT & RETENTION OF HBCC PROVIDERS

To be effective in recruiting providers into the field, CCR&Rs need to have a comprehensive recruitment plan that is aligned with state and local goals for recruiting and training HBCC providers. SFCCNs can be a valuable piece of that plan by providing an opportunity to share with each other, engage in training and technical assistance through the SFCCN and invite local stakeholders to learn more about HBCC. One CoP member indicated that using community partnerships and collaborations, such as with local technical high schools with child development programs, is a strong recruitment pipeline. Another uses a storytelling model which offers an opportunity for current providers to tell their story to would-be providers. This approach demonstrates respect for the perspective of the provider and allows them to market their unique contributions to the community and to the workforce. SFCCNs can be a valuable mechanism for these approaches to the recruitment and retention of the HBCC workforce.

CCR&Rs that offer business management training and technical assistance have higher retention rates of HBCC providers. A CoP member shared that they are offering a business practices series to help new providers get started off right and to see themselves as business owners.

During CoP sessions, there were various discussions about providers' desire to feel validated and viewed as professionals. Some of these discussions highlighted that HBCC providers tend to stay in the field when they see themselves as valuable contributors to the community and helping families stay employed. SFCCNs offer the opportunity for providers to feel empowered by sharing their expertise and experiences with others. One CoP member shared that a provider she was working with was asked to become a mentor to others. That provider reported feeling honored and later shared that she had been planning to quit and work in another field until she was asked to use her experience to help others.

Some CoP participants shared that they use incentives to recruit providers into special programs and cover costs through partnerships with other early childhood supporters such as Lakeshore. Others in the CoP indicate that they offer brunch during events, with door prizes and/or recognition activities.

Another CoP participant shared that they actively involve providers in planning recruitment and retention strategies. Their organization engages with HBCC providers to share their personal stories about what it was like for them when they first became a provider, and to share what has kept them in the field. The CoP participant indicated that they incorporate those ideas into outreach and continuous recruitment activities. Another CoP member highlighted a storytelling model that helps to make human connections and influence those interested in the field. This CoP member shared that they use the [LORE model](#) as their storytelling approach.

Through SFCCNs, CCR&Rs can provide ongoing self-care activities and opportunities for peer connections for much-needed social support as additional retention strategies. An additional strategy through SFCCNs is to seek funding and



develop a substitute pool to enable home-based providers to take much-needed mental health breaks throughout the year.

**Themes that emerged during recruitment and retention discussion among CoP members:**

- Get out there and make those connections!
- Peer mentorship programs empower providers, recruit new providers and promote longevity.
- Approach partnerships with longevity in mind. Look at relationships as partnerships.
- Keep providers involved in the conversations.
- Acknowledge providers' networks when building relationships and elevating their influence (who do they know, trust, go to for services and support). This increases engagement and support, and thereby retention).
- Build partnerships with those who are likeminded or have a common mission.

**Challenges/questions reported by the CoP members:**

- Need current data on why providers are leaving the field.
- Need to systematically assess the impact of our efforts.
- Need to assess if services are contributing to the recruitment/ longevity of providers.



## Tips for Providing Direct Services

- Offer business practices training to newly recruited providers to get them off to a great start.
- Offer self-care activities and opportunities for peer connections.
- Design and offer PD that is relevant and meaningful to the work of home-based and family child care professionals.
- Have and meet trainer competencies for PD providers and link to state registries or state requirement for providing training.
- Show respect for the home environment and schedule of the HBCC provider and their time constraints when providing TA.
- Relationships and commitment are critical in establishment of partnerships and creating community collaborations.
- Identify providers that can help speak to economic and business partners.

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (PD) FOR HBCC PROVIDERS

HBCC providers respond most effectively to PD opportunities when CCR&Rs demonstrate respect for and honor their prior knowledge and experiences, time constraints and unique role in providing care for children and families in the communities in which they live.

CCR&Rs must design and offer PD that is relevant and meaningful to the work of home-based and family child care providers. In designing and implementing PD for providers, CCR&Rs should recognize the strengths, expertise, skills and passion that these providers bring to their work. It is important to meet them where they are and respond with flexibility in training and technical assistance (TTA) offerings. For more detailed information regarding PD within CCR&Rs, see the [PD Companion Guide for CCR&Rs here](#). You will find information on relationship-based PD, Professional Learning Communities, Methods and Modalities of Training and definitions related to education and TTA.

As CCR&Rs operate within the greater system of early care and education within their state, it is important to work in partnership with other state providers of PD or the state's PD system. Being a part of the state training registry, trainer/training approval system and meeting trainer competencies for providing PD in the state is important, as it tells providers that the PD they receive is accepted by the state and will count toward training hours or other ongoing credentialing. This allows for consistent PD across early care and education systems with qualified trainers offering the PD and a common evaluation process for providers to give feedback and input into the trainer/training. One CoP member stated, "They use contracted trainers [and] have requirements for trainers.... It is much more cost-effective for us to use contractors. Before, the delivery was inconsistent. Important to have trainer assessments and evaluations."

CCR&Rs should offer meaningful opportunities for HBCC providers' input into PD and tailor the TTA to their needs: what, when and how TTA is offered. It is crucial to take advantage of virtual PD possibilities because they can ease or eliminate the time constraints that providers have in attending TTA activities in person. One CoP participant shared,



"I also feel the new way of doing things virtually really benefits family child care providers." Another reported their TA specialists are "Taking a training series called 'Lose the Lecture.' It has taught us how to be more interactive with online training. It teaches trainers all sorts of ways to add interactive activities into virtual and face-to-face training to help trainings become more interactive and interesting."

CCR&Rs should ensure PD activities are offered at times and locations that are convenient for HBCC providers, which respects their work/life commitments. It is vital for HBCC to have TTA offered in the languages providers speak and in a manner that is respectful of providers' cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Offering



PD translation services or partnering with other community programs that offer these services is something each CCR&R should investigate or have available to them.

When hosting or participating in planning committees for large group conferences for early care and education, sessions should include those that address HBCC needs and issues. Also, the planning committee should consider hosting discussion and networking for HBCC. Assess PD needs before developing the conference and send out a call for proposals that address HBCC requests or the state priorities for HBCC. Offer training hours/CEUs for attending sessions to encourage participation. As one CoP member shared, “They [providers] don’t like to show up for things they don’t get credit for.” Ensure that evaluations collect information about providers’ experience in attending the event and use that information for future planning.

Providing Technical Assistance (TA) for HBCC providers involves respecting the home environment and providers’ schedules and time constraints, which are quite different than those of center-based care providers. According to a [2019 OPRE report](#), providers indicate that TA is most effective when it is provided by someone who understands home-based child care, when it is specific to HBCC environments and when goals are relevant to HBCC. Best practice indicates that an assessment of HBCC practices should be specific to that setting and goals for ongoing support should be embedded in providers’ daily activities.

Mentoring should be offered only by seasoned HBCC providers. As indicated by a participant in the CoP, “We have implemented SFCCN Regional and State Ambassadors to be provider mentors in our state.

They are currently operating Family Child Care Home Providers, who are nationally accredited and have the experience and education needed to properly mentor providers and help lead our network. These providers are contracted at an hourly rate of \$25 for up to 10 hours per month. They participate in a quarterly planning meeting, help conduct a monthly four-hour networking/training event, and help support, mentor and advocate for providers. We believe that information is received differently when it comes from a person they can identify with and relate to. It builds trust and relationships.” CCR&Rs should use both strengths-based and relationship-based approaches to TA that support and retain HBCC providers.

Group peer networking events offer small HBCC programs, who are often isolated from their peers, the opportunity to connect with one another, share common concerns, promote self-care and find like-minded individuals with which to associate. CCR&Rs can facilitate these events either in-person or virtually and plan them to be formal or informal as the group and topics call for, including communities of practice, peer learning communities, cohorts, collaboratives or networks. These peer learning events are part of the larger category of relationship-based professional learning communities. **The benefits (2020) of professional learning communities include:**

- Collaborative learning
- Reduced isolation of teachers
- Knowledge of evidence-based practices
- Better informed and committed educators
- Creating a culture focused on the goal of improving early learning for children

One CoP member shared that retreats offer providers a chance to get away, connect and learn. Several others responded to that thought by

encouraging the idea of holding a retreat. “Give them a reward. This is recognition, fellowship...we meet at a central point and do something that can help with people’s participation.” One participant shared that their CCR&R held a retreat after their All Our Kin series. “They met, had dinner and this fellowship allows those providers to still talk today.”

You can find complete definitions of each professional learning community, with the purpose, elements, benefits and audience outlined for each in the [PD Companion Guide for CCR&Rs](#).

**Challenges/questions reported by the CoP members included:**

- How do we make the most of our PD resources?
- How do we address people registering and not attending?
- How do we make the best use of contracted trainers and determine their scope of work. Too much control over the scope of work can imply they are not a contractor, but an employee. Check with your state’s Department of Labor on guidelines.
- How do we build a leadership mindset and provider confidence?
- How do we increase trainers’ use of the wide variety of virtual PD options?



## COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND BUSINESS PARTNERSHIPS FOR HBCC

The primary themes CoP participants shared related to community outreach and business partnerships were collaboration, commitment and relationships. One participant said, “I immediately think of collaborating with other agencies that would have similar clients,” and another said, “My take is a commitment. We think of things happening and that we need someone for this purpose and this project. We do not think of the legacy of that partnership. This will evolve and grow. We do not want to have these partnerships fizzle. When I approach community partnerships, I approach for now and later.

### **Essential Term: Partnership**

*A group of organizations with a common interest who agree to work together toward a common goal.*

The success of CCR&Rs’ goals and objectives often depends on the ability to form partnerships with other organizations. Partnerships can focus attention on the needs of providers and families needing care, emphasize specific child care issues, forge relationships among groups that might not otherwise cooperate, and maintain the community’s consistent approach to issues at hand.



Most importantly, partners may promote the objectives of the CCR&R while bringing their own contacts, abilities, talents and resources to the table. This enables the CCR&R to increase its influence and reach out to new audiences.

According to a [toolkit developed for the Department of Health and Human Services](#), partnerships can be informal groups whose members collaborate on a project for a brief period. They can also last a long time and even develop into independent organizations with governing bodies, specific community tasks, funding and goals. Partnerships with outside programs or organizations may be developed within a community, region, state or even nationally. Programs and organizations are developed to generate and/or support initiatives to accomplish a specific set of objectives, regardless of their size and organizational makeup.



Examples of local, regional, state or national organizations that CCR&Rs collaborate with to coordinate and enhance services include:



- Fire departments
- Local and state health departments
- Disaster relief organizations
- State licensing agencies
- Family resource centers
- Towns, landlords/homeowners' associations
- Community action agencies
- Other community organizations
- Child Care Aware of America, National Association for Family Child Care, National Association for the Education of Young Children
- Chambers of Commerce
- Philanthropic organizations
- Local small business groups

A CoP member stated,

“ We identified family child care providers that can help speak to economic and business partners. We need to hear their perspective and help businesses understand the value that these providers have and what different choices families have when selecting child care.” If communities could understand how it could help them build child care capacity, [they would] invite providers to the table so that they have a voice. Providers want to be heard and they want to be seen, to be at the table where they can have an influence. That is one way they have done that.

Another shared,

“ An efficient and successful community of providers relies on their extended community for information and support. Being able to collaborate with these organizations to provide the proper services to the targeted group helps keep momentum going and success rates high.

To be successful in the area of community outreach and business partnerships, CCR&Rs should have a well-developed plan and an approach that will help them do the following:

- Identify priority target populations, organizations and businesses for outreach.
- Identify opportunities for forming strategic partnerships with other organizations in the community.
- Develop stronger partnerships with other organizations working to support children and families.
- Develop messaging tailored to specific audiences that will help engage them in growing the supply of child care and enhancing the quality of existing care, as well as specifically highlighting the importance of HBCC to the community and their role in keeping the workforce employed.

By having a comprehensive outreach and partnership plan, CCR&Rs can expect to develop, grow and sustain:

- Increased awareness of the services offered by the CCR&R.
- Expanded access to a wider range of resources for child care providers.
- Enhanced support for HBCC providers at risk of closure and vulnerable children and families needing care

As shared by one member of the CoP,

“ Another way of outreaching to the communities is collaborating with those having like-minded missions. You will see more than you ever expected. This was seen a great deal especially during the pandemic. Keep it moving and keep it passing through. Many hands make light work.

Another shared,

“ When you are trying to get something accomplished, you must reach out. Everyone has something to contribute. Working in the community is so important, making legislatures and others aware of the importance of providers and how they contribute to the economy. You need others to join in and help you. I do not think it is possible without partnerships. I totally agree about making businesses aware that until you invest in child care, you cannot strengthen your economy. You cannot build a strong workforce without strong child care.

By focusing on communicating their purpose and goals, CCR&Rs can enhance their outreach efforts and the ability to partner. They can enhance the partnership-building process through outreach strategies that involve child care providers, families and the community. One participant in the CoP shared the following as an example, “This one individual was helping promote TA that we had [available]. No one had access to the technology, so we advocated having a couple TA sessions onsite. Because of that one FCC provider, we were able to convince the state to let us go in the area near that provider to provide services to help.” Building and sustaining child care supply and supporting children and families can be accomplished through collaborating with people and groups who share a passion for quality care for all children

### Challenges/questions reported by the CoP members:

- Helping businesses realize how vital child care is to the economy.
- Providers' reluctance/lack of confidence to share their stories with business leaders and state legislators.
- Lack of understanding of the importance of HBCC providers' service to the community

## SUPPORT EQUITY THROUGH HBCC SERVICES

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), in their 2019 [position statement on advancing equity in ECE](#), defines equity as “the state that would be achieved if individuals fared the same way in society regardless of race, gender, class, language, disability or any other social or cultural characteristic.”

CCAoA's commitment to equity is detailed in the organization's [Accountability Statement](#): “As an organization, we will hold ourselves accountable for anchoring diversity, equity and inclusion at the center of all we do. We are committed to facilitating a far-reaching, inclusive process to uncover, confront and correct systemic inequities, both within our organization and within the early childhood education system.”

CoP members shared that HBCC providers need support and funding to comply with requirements like regulations, zoning, licensing, and municipal and state laws. They can be a barrier to providers because of their cost and because



of implementation challenges. In addition, CoP members shared challenges with communicating with providers, such as language and translation issues, and in the way we are now providing many of our services through technology. Not everyone has access to the most needed or up-to-date technology. This impacts HBCC providers' ability to apply for funding and grant opportunities, or to capitalize on professional development opportunities. As one CoP member said, “One of the ways it [equity] keeps coming up for them is that HBCC providers are intimidated by the use of technology. They have neither the technology nor tech savviness. There needs to be thought around helping providers access technology and other resources, like other languages.”

Another participant indicated that “Barriers in equity are everywhere for FCC programs. We are still waiting for our county/ state licensing to make application documents and trainings available in languages other than English.” CoP members shared their frustrations with such issues, which have existed for years. Little has been done to address them, or it takes a long time for change to occur. As indicated by a CoP member whose role it is

to support the Hispanic community, “Advocating for services in the providers’ language is critical. I have been doing this for several years and it is just my voice lifting this issue up. The number of Hispanic providers is growing in the state. Providers want these things in Spanish. They need resources, training, whatever they can provide. Equity is so important.” This member is also responsible for managing the Spanish translation of the state’s child care licensing regulations through to completion. Her advice for addressing this type of equity issue is, “Be patient and flexible as something like regulations being in Spanish takes time. You have to work in the system and the system has to work with you!”

To address inequities in the recruitment of HBCC providers in Ohio, one CoP member shared information about one of their new projects. “The project is designed to help Spanish speakers become licensed providers. This will expand quality child care options for working families and offer critical support to underrepresented family child care businesses that are currently not on our system’s radar.”



## Tips for Supporting Equity

- Advocate against discriminatory practices that compromise the quality of HBCC and the security of providers.
- Have representation from the communities or populations/groups being served.
- Examine how equity issues appear in how we communicate with our HBCC providers, such as language barriers and translation issues faced by providers, and in the way we are now providing many of our services through technology.
- Seek multiple ways to reach others, as not everyone communicates the same way.
- Provide resources, documents and trainings in multiple languages.
- Relationships are the baseline – success happens when HBCC providers recognize you are there for them.



## CoP Member Spotlight: CCR&R Direct Services to HBCC Providers

### Ohio – Action for Children

Action for Children (AFC), Central Ohio's CCR&R, established "The Village," a new SFCCN. This new SFCCN offers business management, quality improvement and networking opportunities (a best practice) to FCC program owners/providers. They also offer on-site individualized coaching, program-to-program mentoring, no-cost professional development/training, program material assistance and various professional events in alignment with provider requests, surveys and assessments, as well as engagement with providers during meetings and trainings. This exemplifies the best practice of ensuring active involvement of HBCC providers, and respect for providers' knowledge, time and unique role in providing care in their community.

The Village uses a strengths-based approach to help pre-licensed and provisionally licensed FCC programs establish and/or maintain their in-home child care businesses. Technical Assistance Coaches use one-on-one and group coaching, virtual and in-person training sessions, networking events and printed/online material to connect with professionals. These coaches approach their individualized support through the lens that each provider has strengths upon which to build. They provide TA based on goals developed together to reach the outcomes the provider has for their business. Some of the TA coaches will provide to providers include:

- Conducting environmental assessments.
- Leading professional development opportunities.
- Organizing network and community engagement events.
- Supporting funding opportunities and program needs/goals.
- Building connections in the early childhood community to recruit and support peer coaches.
- Leading business and leadership training (in-person and virtually).
- Developing new offerings in line with program objectives and desires of providers participating in SFCCN activities.

The services offered through The Village are designed to increase the availability of high-quality, targeted services to HBCC providers in Central Ohio through a relationship-based approach to early educator leadership.

## CoP Member Spotlight: Support Equity for HBCC

### Ohio – Early Childhood Resource Center and Action for Children

In January 2023, Groundwork Ohio published a report entitled, [Leading from Home: Elevating Ohio Family Child Care](#). In the report, they reference ZERO TO THREE information on licensed FCC. “Family child care settings are the mainstay of child care for rural communities, Black and Latinx families, children with special needs and those living in homes with low incomes.” They also point to data from All Our Kin that indicates 70% of low-income children in regular, non-parental care receive that care within three miles of their homes. This report also provides information from the Ohio Child Care Resource and Referral Data Production 2022 which speaks to who is providing FCC in Ohio. It highlights that with more than 4,000 providers offering care in FCC settings, this care is being provided disproportionately by women of color.

A review of additional labor and census data affirmed that Ohio has a “a vibrant and growing Latino community with labor that supports many key sectors of our economy, strong small businesses that provide employment, several elected officials and recognized leaders who contribute to our state’s betterment.” They listened to the needs of the community and to provider stories to reflect the best practices of representation by including them in data collection and decision-making and avoiding a single-story narrative about the needs of the community and families.

To that end, the Ohio Child Care Resource and Referral Association (OCCRRA) announced a new initiative designed to address early childhood access and equity gaps for Latino Ohioans. OCCRRRA is partnering with [LUNA Latinas Unidas](#), an organization whose mission is to leverage technology to develop the professional capacity of Latina early childhood educators. OCCRRRA’s decision to launch this program was based on state and national data that informs ways to rebuild Ohio’s child care infrastructure with more equity. Their approach is to lay an early education foundation that will support the growing population of young dual-language learners who will become part of Ohio’s future graduates and workforce. OCCRRRA’s goal is to support Latinas who want to formally enter the early care and education workforce, and open care slots in areas that have been underserved. This highlights the best practice of lifting up promising practices that lead to equity by looking for ways to work collectively with others who are committed to equity.

Working with LUNA Latinas Unidas, OCCRRRA is launching the award-winning program called ESCALERAS (ladders in Spanish). It is made up of state-approved modules that form a culturally responsive “ladder” designed to help native-Spanish speakers become licensed family child care professionals and micro-entrepreneurs. This will expand quality child care options for working families and offer needed support to Ohio’s family child care professionals who provide essential child care services but are currently not on the system’s radar. These providers work and live in so-called [child care deserts](#) identified in a 2018-2020 study that showed that close to 60% of Latinos live in areas where licensed care is not available.



## Conclusion

The decline in HBCC has had the greatest impact on vulnerable groups and low-income households and, because of the pandemic, families are finding fewer options for high-quality child care. The changing child care landscape makes it critical that we consider innovative approaches to make sure that high-quality child care is available, accessible and affordable for all families who require care. The tips and strategies in this document provide capacity-building support for CCR&Rs to build dedicated and intentional services to support the economic and mental health needs of COVID-19-impacted HBCC programs in their communities through SFCCNs. They will also assist CCR&Rs to respond, adapt, develop and enhance their own suite of dedicated pandemic response supports to the most vulnerable providers: disaster-affected, home-based small businesses and those in disaster-prone geographies.

This document was created in partnership with CCR&Rs that participated in the Family Child Care Promising CCR&R Practices Communities of Practice to share their experiences, challenges and successes in planning and implementing a SFCCN as an innovative programming practice to recruit and retain home-based child care providers and to sustain and increase available child care options for families. Participants examined best practices, embedded these into planning and implementation, and provided their professional experience and wisdom to craft this resource. We hope you find information and support throughout this document to help you meet the needs of the HBCC workforce in your communities.

We want to thank the following CCR&Rs for their invaluable contribution to *Tips & Strategies on Staffed Family Child Care Networks (SFCCNs) for Child Care Resource and Referrals (CCR&Rs)*.

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- **Nicole Davis**, Former Recruitment, Retention, Referral and Outreach Specialist
- **Michele Gray**, Former Recruitment, Retention, Referral and Outreach Specialist
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### Missouri – Child Care Aware of Missouri

- **Robin Phillips**, Chief Executive Officer
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### Ohio – Action for Children

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