

**237A.26 Statewide resource and referral services.**

1. The department shall administer the funding for a statewide grant program for child care resource and referral services. Grants shall only be awarded to community-based nonprofit incorporated agencies and public agencies. Grants shall be awarded to facilitate the establishment of regional resource and referral agencies throughout the state, based upon the distribution of the child population in the state.

2. The department shall provide oversight of and annually evaluate an agency which is awarded a grant to provide resource and referral services to a region.

3. An agency which receives a grant to provide resource and referral services shall perform both of the following functions:

a. Organize assistance to child care homes and child care facilities utilizing training levels based upon the child care providers' degrees of experience and interest.

b. Operate in partnership with both public and private interests and coordinate resource and referral services with existing community services.

4. An agency may be required by the department to match the grant with financial resources of not more than twenty-five percent of the amount of the grant. The financial resources may include a private donation, an in-kind contribution, or a public funding source other than a separate state grant for child care service improvement.

5. An agency, to be eligible to receive a grant to provide resource and referral services, must have a board of directors if the agency is an incorporated nonprofit agency or must have an advisory board if the agency is a public agency, to oversee the provision of resource and referral services. The board shall include providers, consumers, and other persons interested in the provision or delivery of child care services.

6. An agency which receives a child care resource and referral grant may be awarded funding to provide various child care-related services, which may include but are not limited to any of the following services:

a. Assist families in selecting quality child care. The agency must provide referrals to registered and licensed child care facilities, and to persons providing care, supervision, and guidance of a child which is not defined as child care under section 237A.1 and may provide referrals to unregistered providers.

b. Assist child care providers in adopting appropriate program and business practices to provide quality child care services.

c. Provide information to the public regarding the availability of child care services in the communities within the agency's region.

d. Actively encourage the development of new and expansion of existing child care facilities in response to identified community needs.

e. Provide specialized services to employers, including the provision of resource and referral services to employee groups identified by the employer and the provision of technical assistance to develop employer-supported child care programs. The specialized services may include but are not limited to working with employers to identify networks of recommended registered and licensed child care providers for employee groups and to implement employer-supported quality improvement initiatives among the network providers.

f. Refer eligible child care facilities to the federal child care food programs.

g. Loan toys, other equipment, and resource materials to child care facilities.

7. The department may contract with an agency receiving a child care resource and referral grant to perform any of the following functions relating to publicly funded services providing care, supervision, and guidance of a child:

a. Determine an individual's eligibility for the services in accordance with income requirements.

b. Administer a voucher, certificate, or other system for reimbursing an eligible provider of the services.

8. For purposes of improving the quality and consistency of data collection, consultation, and other support to child care home and child development home providers, a resource and referral services agency grantee shall coordinate and assist with publicly and privately funded efforts administered at the community level to provide the support. The support and efforts addressed by a grantee may include but are not limited to community-funded child

care home and child development home consultants. Community members involved with the assistance may include but are not limited to the efforts of an early childhood Iowa area board under chapter 256I, and of community representatives of education, health, human services, business, faith, and public interests.

90 Acts, ch 1248, §4; 92 Acts, ch 1083, §5; 99 Acts, ch 192, §22; 2002 Acts, ch 1142, §23 – 26, 31; 2010 Acts, ch 1031, §301; 2011 Acts, ch 98, §1

[T] Section amended