

## **TEMPE CARE4ME PR/FAQ**

### **CARE4ME CONNECTS FAMILIES TO CHILD CARE AND SERVICES**

City of Tempe Launches Application to Help Families Find and Access Opportunities

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Accessing quality care that's affordable for children just got easier in Tempe with the launch of CARE4ME. CARE4ME is the first complete digital solution offering families the ability to both search and apply for child care and connect with other support services like transportation and employment. Lack of access to care can be a major to economic mobility. Tempe estimates that 60% of local families that could obtain child care subsidies and tuition support are not aware programs exist or how to access them. With CARE4ME, Tempe is improving family awareness of available child care resources and providing a quick and simple way to access them.

Child care is a significant barrier to economic opportunity for families. Research shows 75% of people with children have problems finding affordable, quality child care and another 74% say insufficient child care has prevented or impacted employment and career opportunities. One of the reasons for these challenges is the difficulty identifying, accessing and paying for good quality care.

"Care4Me was developed to meet a vital need in the community and is aligned with the City of Tempe's goal to facilitate the success of all Tempe children and families", said Tempe Mayor Cara Chiles.

"If families have an easy way to explore and access child care that meets their individual needs, that's the first win," Chiles said. "If we can also help them find a state subsidy so less of their paychecks go toward child care or connect with the city's housing navigator, that could have a long-term impact in their lives."

Care4Me creates a centralized location for families to find the information required to identify child care resources and apply for benefits. CARE4ME is designed to consolidate and simplify the information and access to services with a single software application. Care4Me works in tandem with a live Care Navigator to guide users through the identification and application processes by answering questions and helping complete and submit applications.

"We've done extensive research and identified families with children that could be benefitting from available child care resources. We know many do not apply because they do not know services exist, how to apply, and are worried about quality and location and most importantly costs," said Kyra Infant, City Child Care Director. "With CARE4ME, families can research available services which are important, and work with a Care Navigator for assistance registering for child care slots and applying for subsidies. Our goal is to help 10,000 new families' access child care services in Year 1."

CARE4ME is a website accessible on any device and can be done with or without registering and providing personal information. CARE4ME offers multiple search paths for users, including topic, search filters and sorting and a guided search that matches users to benefits. The guided search uses screening questions to identify needs and match users to available resources they might not know they needed or were eligible to receive. If a user creates a log in, they can save benefits to a cart and find instructions and guidance to apply. CARE4ME directly links to the most common benefits like State Child Care Subsidies. Users can also explore available child care options, review their state licensing and quality star ratings and will help facilitate enrollment.

“The CARE4ME application was a breath of fresh air and relieved a lot of stress single parents live with daily. CARE4ME guided me through the steps of setting up an account, highlighted special programs for which I qualify and those programs may be able to provide financial assistance, helped me determine the best fit for my youngest child’s child care and find programs my other three children can attend before and after school,” said Marilee, a single mother of four. “With CARE4ME, I was able to review state ratings and find detailed information on each facility. The online application made things quick and painless and took the fear and stress out of the process.”

For more information, please visit the CARE4ME site at [www.care4me.gov](http://www.care4me.gov).

### **CARE4ME Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)**

1. What are we building and why?

The City of Tempe is building the CARE4ME SaaS software application to connect users to child care and services. Through extensive study, City staff have documented that local families who could access care benefits do not apply for various reasons, including a lack of awareness benefits exist, that providers have available capacity and that benefits are available for many different social-economic segments of the population. Benefits and services include: identifying care providers, connection to city and community resources, and access to financial assistance to offset or cover the costs of services.

CARE4ME will provide an easy to use solution for finding information and eligibility on benefits and services and also offer guided search and automated support functions to help users apply.

2. How does CARE4ME work?.

Users access CARE4ME from any Internet browser on any device to locate services or connect with a live Care Navigator for support.

- Mobile devices - smartphones and tablets

- Major browsers
- Individualized ongoing support, if participants register

3. How will customers find Care4Me? How will they get started?

The City of Tempe will support CARE4ME with a robust marketing campaign to outreach to residents and employers in Tempe and encourage participation. We will be able to leverage existing city networks and also partner networks such as Arizona State University (ASU) or Downtown Tempe Authority (DTA).

4. What agency will be responsible for the operation and maintenance of CARE4ME?

In the City of Tempe, CARE4ME will be owned and managed by the city Human Services Department.

5. Why should customers care? How is this better than what already exists?

Today there is no comparable or comprehensive system that allows people to: explore childcare options, find and apply for financial assistance, and connect with other resources that improve quality of life such as parenting classes or housing programs. The city will also have long-term COVID recovery plans that can assist people, such as connections to rent assistance or mental health counseling.

6. If successful, how big could this be? Why is it a good business?

Child care and related services are at the heart of every successful municipality as they support the health of the community and the economy. In 2010 the US federal government spent \$927 billion dollars on means tested social service programs which includes childcare services. According to the US Census, in 2019 there were 9.2 million households with children between ages 3 and 5.

Childcare is a universal need in all communities. Why? - without stable, quality childcare a family would be unable to work, find gameful employment or pursue educational opportunities. (Aspirational goal -By having a standardized common application, utilized across multiple agencies, accessing childcare in general, providing universal access to child care services).

6. What are the CARE4ME MVP (MVP = Minimum Viable Product) features?

The CARE4ME MVP include the following initial features;

- Digitalization of the existing Arizona directory of childcare providers and services.
- Guided search for financial and family service support.
- Benefits eligibility screening.
- Automated application guided support.

7. What features could future CARE4ME versions include?

Care4Me will ask users for feedback and suggestions on possible improvements to the site, including the addition and refinement of features. Possible features might include the ability to apply for services in the application and not need to move to another site. This feature could include both applying for financial assistance and booking services.

8. What benefits and services will CARE4ME include? (See question 1)

CARE4ME is designed to connect people to the benefits they need to care for their families with a focus on children and child care. Other services are required to care for children, including access to transportation, counseling, workforce training and education. CARE4ME starts with a foundation of child care services and allows users to build off the foundation to add the benefits and services most important to their communities.

9. Who or how will the list of services be updated and how often?

The site will be updated on a regular basis, at least monthly. The CARE4ME licensed childcare provider directory will be populated by the State of Arizona Department of Health and Human Services and the Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) Directory.

Will need to determine the current schedule of data transfer from numerous providers.

10. What language/s will CARE4ME be available in?

The initial CARE4Me launch will be in English and Spanish. The Version 2.0 roadmap will potentially expand to Arabic. Additional languages can be added for deployments in other areas as desired.

11. Will CARE4ME collect PII and if so how will it be used, stored and secured?

Yes the data that a user is agreeing to provide will be stored based on applicable security laws and regulations. By providing this personal information the system can better align them with their needs.

A registered user can request to see the information that we have collected on them at any time.

12. Does CARE4ME need to be interoperable with other applications and how will that happen?

Future versions of Care4Me may be interoperable with other application. The Care4Me team will identify and then work with various agencies to provide additional services to include such things as transportation, counseling, etc. In addition we would work on intergovernmental agreements to expand our data sharing opportunities.

13. What benefits and services will users be able to apply for using CARE4ME?

CARE4ME will include the State of Arizona Department of Economic Security Child Care subsidies and other benefits and services. It will also include the City of Tempe PreK-program, First Things First scholarships, and awareness to flex spending and tax credit programs.

14. Will CARE4ME provide ratings for childcare facilities and if so how will these be generated? Does CARE4ME guarantee the quality of the childcare service?

CARE4ME does not guarantee the quality of services but will refer to the Statewide quality rating system.

15. What screening questions will CARE4ME use to match users to benefits?

The guided search will use screening questions to determine the benefits and services that users are eligible to receive. The Tempe Department of Human Service will develop the screening questions.

NOTE: the list of screening questions are in development.

16. What will customers be most disappointed in?

Customers will be most disappointed when they want to access a specific program that is at capacity and does not have capacity.

17. What other options did we consider and reject?

There are a number of potential functions for future versions. We considered a separate application and decided to limit it to an online web service that is mobile friendly.

18. What are our hotly debated topics? Are all hotly debated topics included?

The hotly debated topic is what other services to include and where to limit. What is the right combination of services to include in CARE4ME to provide the most help without distracting or overwhelming the user?

The initial version of CARE4ME is limited to a complete list of child care options and connections with other supported services.

19. How long has the team been working on this doc, and how many levels of review has it gone through to date?

The City of Tempe developed the idea of CARE4ME in 2019 and later workshopped CARE4ME in August 2020 with the ASU CIC.

20. Is there additional support or access to live representatives if I have a problem?

CARE4ME will have multiple levels of support starting with self-service guidance, a chat bot and Care Navigators. The built in self-guided search will provide answers to top information queries. A live Care Navigator will be available and able to assist users with live help. City of Tempe staff can also help, especially at locations where users are likely to be like city libraries and community centers. The Care Navigator support leverages existing City of Tempe support services.

21. Can I use this on my mobile devices? If yes, how's the experience?

Yes. It will be the same workflow as the website, but tailored towards the screen size of mobile devices.

22. What is the worst thing that could go wrong with CARE4 me?

A family found child care services through Care4Me and the child was harmed while in the service providers care.

23. How could Care4Me fail?

If the site is developed and not properly marketed it could lead to a lack of adoption.

24. Is CARE4Me being supported with my tax dollars?

Yes. Care4Me is a new offering for the Human Services Department, much like a new housing program to serve an underserved population. As the city identifies needs in the community, we tailor programs and services around meeting that need. Care4Me is supported by tax dollars and also funding from corporate funders.

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