



## FAQs: COVID-19 Public Health Support Funds for Child Care

The costs to implement state and federal public health guidance related to COVID-19 are putting additional financial strain on child care providers, who are part of an already struggling industry that is critical to our economy reopening.

To support costs associated with implementing public health guidance, the Legislative Advisory Commission previously approved a request – developed by the Education and Child Care Workgroup under the direction of Governor Tim Walz and Lt. Governor Peggy Flanagan – to provide \$56.6 million in federal Coronavirus Relief Fund funding to all eligible child care providers. Recently, the Legislative Advisory Commission approved an additional \$53.3 million to extend the funding through December.

The application process for providers to receive this COVID-19 Public Health Support Funds for Child Care funding will be very similar to the application administered in July. All eligible providers, including the providers who received funding for July through September, must fill out an application and attestation form to receive the funds. They will receive the online application and attestation form via a unique email to eligible providers. **The application period for the October-through-December funds will open at 8 a.m. on Oct. 5 and close at 5 p.m. on Oct. 14. Providers who do not submit the application by the deadline will not be eligible for the funding for the duration of the funding period.**

Below are answers to frequently asked questions about the funding.

### 1. Who will administer these funds?

The Minnesota Department of Human Services will administer the COVID-19 Public Health Support Funds for Child Care with support from the Governor's Children's Cabinet.

[Child Care Aware of Minnesota](#) is contracted to raise awareness of the funding and help providers navigate the application and payment process. Child Care Aware of Minnesota is a nonprofit that, for more than 25 years, has helped families find child care, supported the professional growth of child care providers, and informed local communities on the importance of quality early education for every child. Child Care Aware of Minnesota works with agencies across the state that support the quality and professional growth of child care providers and programs. The Child Care Aware system has experience providing grants to Minnesota child care providers, including the recent Peacetime Emergency Child Care Grants.

### 2. What types of child care programs are eligible for COVID-19 Public Health Support Funds for Child Care?

Child care program types eligible for funds include:

- Family and group family licensed under Minnesota Rules, Chapter 9502
- Child care centers licensed under Minnesota Rules, Chapter 9503

- Certified license-exempt child care centers under Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 245H; see question 6 for more information about certified centers
- Tribally licensed child care programs.

In addition, the above eligible programs must be licensed or certified and in good standing with the Minnesota Department of Human Services (under Minnesota Rules, Chapter 9502 or 9503) or their tribe, and have not been:

- The subject of a finding of fraud
- Prohibited from receiving public funds under Minnesota Statutes, Section 245.095
- Under revocation or under temporary immediate suspension.

To receive these funds an eligible program must attest in writing to:

- Having been operating and serving children as of Sept. 15, 2020 (see questions 4 and 10 for exceptions)
- Intend to continue operating and serving children from Sept. 15 through Dec. 15, 2020 (see questions 4 and 10 for exceptions).

### **3. In what ways can eligible child care providers use these funds?**

Eligible programs must attest in writing to use these funds for:

- Incentives or overtime to working staff, and/or
- Increased costs or lost revenue resulting from employment or business interruptions due to COVID-19-related business closures, and/or
- Increased costs associated with providing distance learning support, and/or
- Implementing health and safety practices that prevent the spread of COVID-19 in a child care environment based on guidance created by the commissioner of Human Services, in consultation with the commissioner of Health. This guidance is posted on [mn.gov/childcare](https://mn.gov/childcare).

This funding cannot be used for items that have already been supported by other state and/or federal funding, and cannot be used to pay taxes.

Child care providers accepting these funds also:

- Must prioritize use of these funds during the monthly award periods, and must use funds to cover costs incurred after March 1, 2020, and before Dec. 30, 2020
- Must report program information via the child care program survey at [mn.gov/childcare](https://mn.gov/childcare)
- May charge fees to families attending the program; these fees must comply with the Governor's Emergency Executive Order 20-10 prohibiting price gouging
- May require fees from families to reserve space in the program
- Must not require Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) copayments from families whose children attended prior to the declared peacetime emergency, but are no longer attending.

#### **4. When do providers have to be open in order to be eligible to receive these funds?**

To be eligible to receive these funds, providers must attest that they have been operating and serving children as of Sept. 15, 2020, and intend to remain operating and serving children through Dec. 15, 2020. There are two exceptions:

- Service disruptions that were necessary due to public health recommendations issued to protect the safety and health of children and child care providers requested by the Minnesota Department of Human Services or Minnesota Department of Health
- Planned temporary closures for a provider vacation and holidays for up to two weeks over the duration of the funding months from Sept. 15 to Dec. 15, 2020, but not sequentially.

#### **5. What is the timeframe for awarding these funds?**

Funds will be awarded on a monthly basis with the first funding installment being made at the end of October. All eligible providers will receive funding in three monthly installments.

#### **6. What types of certified centers are eligible to receive these funds?**

For the October-through-December funding, all types of certified centers that meet the eligibility criteria are eligible to receive funds.

#### **7. Why do I need to provide my Social Security number or Federal Employer Identification Number as a part of the application and attestation form?**

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) requires the Minnesota Department of Human Services to obtain your Social Security number or Federal Employer Identification Number to report what is paid to you. The name and number you give must match your name with the IRS. If your name and tax identification number are determined to not be valid due to a fraudulent act, you will not receive COVID-19 Public Health Support Funds for Child Care, you will have to pay back any of those funds you have been paid, and you may be subject to an IRS fine.

#### **8. Will the funding award be considered income when I file my taxes?**

Providers who receive these funds will be issued a 1099 form in January 2021, showing how much was paid to the provider in 2020. Providers are encouraged to consult with an accountant or tax expert to fully understand the tax implications of this funding. If providers have questions after receiving their 1099 form, they can contact Minnesota Management and Budget at 651-201-8201.

#### **9. What information and documentation is needed to be eligible to receive these funds?**

Providers are required to fill out an application, sign an attestation form, and, if directed, provide a Federal Tax Identification/Employee Identification Number, Social Security number, or submit a completed copy of their W-9 form. The Minnesota Department of Human Services had W-9 forms on file for some providers, including those who received a Peacetime Emergency Child Care Grant. The department will only require a W-9 form from providers who did not currently have one on file.

## **10. Can providers temporarily close and/or go on vacation during the funding period and still be eligible for these funds?**

Providers must attest to having been operating and serving children as of Sept. 15, 2020, and to remain open for the duration of the three-month funding period, to be eligible to receive these funds. There is an exception for service disruptions that are necessary due to public health guidance requested by the Minnesota Department of Human Services or Minnesota Department of Health to protect the safety and health of children and child care providers, and for planned temporary closures for a provider vacation and holidays up to two weeks – but not sequentially – at any time during the funding period. The funding period for eligible providers is between Sept. 15 and Dec. 15, 2020.

## **11. How does a provider apply to receive these funds?**

Applications will open at 8 a.m. Monday, Oct. 5, and will close at 5 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 14. Eligible licensed family child care providers, licensed child care centers and certified centers will receive an email with a link to the application and attestation. Emails will be sent to the authorized agent for child care centers, the center operator for certified child care centers, and the license holder for family child care providers. Providers will have the option to decline the funds if they do not want to receive them. To be eligible, the provider's license must be in good standing and they must not have been found responsible for fraud.

## **12. How can I ensure I receive the email with the link to apply for the funds?**

You should add [dhs.survey.admin@state.mn.us](mailto:dhs.survey.admin@state.mn.us) and [DHS.child.care@state.mn.us](mailto:DHS.child.care@state.mn.us) to your email client safe-sender list. The application will be sent from [dhs.survey.admin@state.mn.us](mailto:dhs.survey.admin@state.mn.us) and the application receipt confirmation email will be sent from [DHS.child.care@state.mn.us](mailto:DHS.child.care@state.mn.us). Adding these email addresses ahead of time will prevent these important emails from being filtered to your spam or junk folder. Follow these [instructions for adding an email address to your safe-sender list](#).

## **13. What are the funding amounts?**

Funding amounts are up to \$1,200 per month for three months for family child care providers, up to \$8,500 per month for three months for licensed child care centers and approximately \$3,000 per month for certified centers. Funds will be scaled based on the number of applications received.

## **14. When can I expect to receive the funding awards, and how will I receive them?**

Monthly payments will be mailed to the authorized agent, center operator or license holder at the address on file with the Minnesota Department of Human Services, Licensing Division. The first of the three monthly payments will be mailed from Minnesota Management and Budget, a state agency, by the end of October. Eligible providers should anticipate the November payment by the end of that month with the December payment to be mailed around Dec. 15, pending no changes in provider eligibility as noted above in Question 2.

## **15. What if information about my program (address, ownership, authorized agent) changes between payments?**

You should contact your Minnesota Department of Human Services, county or tribal licenser to update the information as soon as the changes occur. Failure to submit timely changes may result in your payment being

held. Additionally, if you are contemplating changes to your program that may affect your eligibility for funding, contact the Minnesota Department of Human Services to determine impacts.

### **16. Will I still be eligible for payments if I move during the funding period?**

Providers who move during the funding period remain eligible for the funds as long as the funding criteria continue to be met. Moves or “planned temporary closures” are allowed for up to two weeks over the duration of the funding months from Sept. 15 to Dec. 15, 2020. If a move or planned temporary closure exceeds the allowable time, the provider will not be eligible to receive further payments. Providers planning to move during the funding period should work closely with their Minnesota Department of Human Services, county or tribal licenser to ensure the move does not impact funding eligibility.

### **17. What will the check look like?**

The checks will come from Minnesota Management and Budget / State of Minnesota. The checks have perforations at the edges and the bottom.

### **18. What if my check is lost, stolen or damaged?**

For assistance, please contact Cindy Schneider, Minnesota Department of Human Services Child Care Services Division, at 651-431-3864 or [DHS.child.care@state.mn.us](mailto:DHS.child.care@state.mn.us).

### **19. If I don't want to receive these funds, can I decline?**

Yes, providers should decline the funds using the same application that is used to accept the funds.

### **20. I didn't receive an email. How can I confirm if I am eligible to receive a these funds?**

If you do not receive an email with the application or with a message explaining the reason your program is ineligible for the funds, please contact Child Care Aware of Minnesota at 651-290-9704 or [supportfunds@childcareawaremn.org](mailto:supportfunds@childcareawaremn.org).

### **21. How long do I have to fill out the application?**

Providers will receive an email with the application and instructions by 8 a.m. on Monday, Oct. 5. Providers will have until 5 p.m. on Wednesday, Oct. 14, to fill out the application and provide additional documents, or to decline the funds. Providers who do not complete the application during this timeframe will not be eligible to receive these funds at any point during the three-month funding period.

### **22. How will I know that my application was received after I have applied?**

After you submit an application, you will be directed to a webpage that confirms your application was received. In addition, you will receive an email confirmation within 24 hours **after** you submit your application. If you did not receive a confirmation email **and** more than 24 hours has passed since submission of your application, check your junk or spam folder.

**23. If I don't fill out the application sent in October, can I receive the monthly funding award in subsequent months?**

No, providers must complete the application and attestation during the application period between 8 a.m. on Monday, Oct. 5, and 5 p.m. on Wednesday, Oct. 14. Providers who completed the application and attestation and met the eligibility criteria for the funds will receive a first payment around the end of October.

**24. After filling out the application, do I need to take any additional action to receive the monthly payments?**

No. Eligible providers who fill out the application and accept the funds will automatically receive the monthly payments, provided they have not given notice that they had to cease operations for a reason other than a public health directive. This assumes the provider still meets the eligible requirements listed above in question 2. If a provider closes for any reason other than a public health directive before the three-month funding period ends, they must [report closure using this form](#).

**25. What if I decide to close and I already received one or more monthly payments of these funds?**

When applying to receive these funds, providers must attest that they meet the funding requirements, which include remaining open for the three-month funding period (Sept. 15 through Dec. 15). If a provider closes before the three-month funding period ends, they must [report closure using this form](#). You will not be eligible for subsequent monthly funding awards and may be required to return funds you already received.

**26. Are providers who receive Child Care Assistance Program payments eligible for these funds?**

Yes, providers who receive Child Care Assistance Program payments are eligible for these funds. However, providers must not require Child Care Assistance Program copayments from families whose children attended prior to the peacetime emergency but are no longer attending.

**27. Are providers who receive Early Learning Scholarships eligible for these funds?**

Yes, providers who receive Early Learning Scholarships are eligible for these funds.

**28. Do child care providers have to be participating in Parent Aware to receive these funds?**

No, participation in Parent Aware is not required to receive these funds.

**29. Do child care providers have to use Develop, Minnesota's Quality Improvement & Registry Tool, to receive these funds?**

No.

**30. Is the data in child care provider applications and the information about funding awards public data?**

Most of the data in funding applications is classified as public data, and if requested, must be made available to the person requesting it. Examples of private data that cannot be shared with the public are an individual's Social Security number, and data that can potentially identify children in programs. If you have data related inquiries, please contact the Minnesota Department of Human Services Child Care Services Division by sending an email to [DHS.child.care@state.mn.us](mailto:DHS.child.care@state.mn.us).

**31. If child care providers completed the survey informing the state they are open, does this mean they will receive or have already applied for these funds?**

No, completing that survey is not part of the application process and does not mean providers applied for or will receive these funds. However, this information will be used to help confirm that providers remain open. Completing that survey allows providers to share with Child Care Aware of Minnesota, the Children's Cabinet and Minnesota Department of Human Services that they are operating and serving children, so those agencies can share the information with parents and guardians seeking child care.

**32. Do child care providers have to operate at their full licensed capacity to receive these funds?**

No, providers who hold a license do not have to operate at their full licensed capacity to receive these funds. In fact, implementing health and safety recommendations to prevent the spread of COVID-19 may limit the ability to operate at full licensed capacity for some providers.

**33. Can child care providers charge fees if they receive these funds?**

Child care providers receiving these funds may charge fees to families attending their program. These fees must comply with the Governor's Emergency Executive Order 20-10 prohibiting price gouging. Providers accepting these funds may require fees from families to reserve space in the program, but they cannot require Child Care Assistance Program copayments from families whose children attended prior to the declared peacetime emergency but are no longer attending.

**34. What are the consequences for a provider who applied for and accepted these funds not meeting the funding requirements?**

If there is indication that a provider has failed to meet COVID-19 Public Health Support Funds for Child Care requirements, they will receive written notice and be provided an opportunity to clarify and/or correct any non-compliance. Failure to make the required corrections, and/or indication that a provider provided false or misleading information to the Minnesota Department of Human Services with regard to the funding requirements, may result in discontinuation of future installment payments, recoupment of payments already made, and/or referral to the Office of Inspector General for additional action.

### **35. What should I do if I believe a provider is not meeting the funding requirements?**

If you are concerned that a child care provider is not following the funding requirements, email [DHS.child.care@state.mn.us](mailto:DHS.child.care@state.mn.us) with “COVID-19 Public Health Support Funds for Child Care Complaint” in the subject line. Include as much detail as you can, including:

- Child care provider or program name
- Name of director if it’s a child care center
- Address of child care provider or program
- If licensed, the license number (which can be found at [licensinglookup.dhs.state.mn.us](https://licensinglookup.dhs.state.mn.us))
- The requirement you believe the child care provider may not be following
- A description of the way in which the child care provider is not following the requirement.

### **36. What if I am not sure if I am eligible to receive the funds?**

Please call Child Care Aware at 651-290-9704 or email [supportfunds@childcareawaremn.org](mailto:supportfunds@childcareawaremn.org).

### **37. Are there other financial supports available to child care providers?**

Yes. The Minnesota Department of Education has waived the absent-day policy in the Early Learning Scholarship program, and enabled concurrent payment to a provider who needs to temporarily close and a replacement provider selected by the scholarship recipient’s family.

The Child Care Assistance Program will pay for additional absent days when families request an exemption and will pay for up to four weeks for a provider who needs to temporarily close. The program will also pay unlimited numbers of absent days for children with a medically related exemption, which can apply for any COVID-19-related reason, until Nov. 11, 2020. For more information, visit the [Minnesota Department of Human Services COVID-19 waivers and modifications webpage](#).

Child care providers may also be eligible for business loans, including the [Federal Small Business Administration COVID-19 Disaster Loans](#). Small Business Administration Resource Partners are available to help with no-cost, one-on-one business counseling regarding COVID-19. Refer to this [Child Care Financial Support Matrix for additional information and resources on these and other child care provider financial support programs](#).

Child Care Aware and the Minnesota Department of Human Services are working together to acquire supplies and personal protective equipment that providers may not be able to get or afford. Providers are encouraged to [fill out this survey to document their needs](#).

### **38. I need the application translated into another language, how can I get help?**

- Si necesita ayuda para comprender esta carta, comuníquese con Vanessa Carrasco Berliz [vcarrasco@thinksmall.org](mailto:vcarrasco@thinksmall.org), 651-641-6660
- Hadaad ubaahantahay caawimaad fahanka warqadan, fadlan la xiriir Abdiinoor Sigat [asigat@milestonesmn.org](mailto:asigat@milestonesmn.org), 320-251-5081
- Yog tias koj xav tau kev pab nkg siab tsab ntawv no, thov hu rau Julie Yang [jyang@thinksmall.org](mailto:jyang@thinksmall.org), 651-366-6792

Child Care Aware of Minnesota will use Language Line Services for languages other than Spanish, Hmong and Somali; they can be reached by phone at 651-290-9704 or by email at [supportfunds@childcareawaremn.org](mailto:supportfunds@childcareawaremn.org).

**39. What can funds be used for?**

Funds can be used for costs associated with implementing public health guidance, including cleaning supplies, increased staff time associated with cleaning, costs related to public health exclusion guidance, costs for implementing symptom screening or costs related to implementing consistent cohort groups of children. Funds can also be used to provide incentives for staff, like providing employees who work directly with children during the funding period with hazard pay or overtime. Funds can also be used for increased costs associated with supporting distance learning including internet service, technology costs and increased staffing. Funds cannot be used for property taxes or other taxes. Funds should be prioritized to be used during the monthly award periods and providers must use funds to cover costs incurred after March 1, 2020, and before Dec. 30, 2020.

**40. Will child care providers have to save or submit receipts to prove how funds were spent?**

No.

**41. Under any circumstances will I have to pay these funds back?**

These funds do not constitute a loan and child care providers who comply with funding requirements will not be required to pay them back. However, funding recipients found to have violated the terms of the application process or attestation, or who are found to have provided false or misleading information to the Minnesota Department of Human Services with regard to funding requirements, may have future payments discontinued, prior payments recouped, and/or be referred to the Office of Inspector General for additional action.

**42. Can providers who applied for and received financial support from another source (local or city government, nonprofit foundation, etc.) still be eligible for these funds?**

Yes. However, this funding can only be used for additional reimbursements of business interruptions and not for items that have already been supported by other state and/or federal funding.

**43. Are child care providers who received a Paycheck Protection Program loan or an Economic Injury Disaster loan (or any other federal Small Business Administration loan or grant, including an Economic Injury Disaster Loan Advance) still eligible for these funds?**

Yes.

**44. If I receive these funds, how does that affect my Paycheck Protection Program loan?**

Please refer this question to your Payment Protection Program loan servicer or financial advisor.

**45. I still have questions and I am not finding answers in this FAQ. Where do I send my questions?**

Please call Child Care Aware at 651-290-9704 or email [supportfunds@childcareawaremn.org](mailto:supportfunds@childcareawaremn.org).